

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TOWN OF VINTON, VIRGINIA



September, 2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TOWN OF VINTON, VIRGINIA

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The Town of Vinton would like to give a special thanks to former
Town Manager B. Clayton Goodman, III for all his efforts put forth in initiating “The Plan for Vinton”.

PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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This Plan was prepared cooperatively by members of the Vinton Planning Commission, Town staff, and project consultants and was assisted by input from Vinton stakeholders through various public forums. The Plan was approved by the Planning Commission following a public hearing on July 27, 2004 and recommended to Town Council. The Plan was adopted by Town Council following a second public hearing on September 7, 2004.



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INTRODUCTION

The Economic and Community Development Plan is a supplement to the Comprehensive Plan's implementation strategy. It provides both a detailed summary of deficiencies or issues and recommends action plans for five (5) critical components of the Town that serve to define Vinton. Each was initially identified during the citizen participation process and earlier visioning exercises. The consensus was "Town leaders and its citizens must address each of these critical elements to ensure the very vitality and image of our community."

Quality of life was an overriding issue entwined in all five (5) areas.

1. Gateway Entrance/Corridors
2. Housing and Neighborhoods
3. Greenways/Parks and Recreation/Youth Centers
4. Economic Development
5. Downtown Redevelopment

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan was the result of an active citizen participation process. This process raised public awareness about specific community needs, and possible strategies and action plans that could benefit future generations.

Through the Citizens Planning Academy and community-wide surveys, five (5) core issues were initially identified, came to the forefront and were considered an essential part of the Comprehensive Plan. The surveys and academy were the foundation of the planning process.



The comprehensive planning process formally began in May 2003, with a public forum to converse with Vinton's citizens and begin to organize and identify key issues. A second workshop with Vinton residents and stakeholders was held in June 2003, where each participant chose one of the five (5) community elements referenced above to serve as their primary focus. Focus groups were formed, and each served as the driving force behind the visioning, and enabled citizens to provide creative ideas for Vinton's future. Additional workshops and forums were held to reach consensus on priorities and conceptual plans. A detailed outline of the entire process can be found on the accompanying flow chart.

The following summarizes the initial issues brought forth during the community meetings beginning with citizen input at the initial "Plan for Vinton" meeting in May 2003. Subsequently, strategies and action plans were developed for each issue with assistance from the planning and design teams and Town officials and can be found below:

Gateway Entrances/Corridor Improvements Issues

- Virginia Avenue bridge is too narrow and poses a pedestrian safety hazard
- Streetlights, banners, hanging baskets, and trees are lacking along Hardy Road, Bypass Road, and the south side of Walnut Avenue
- Poor signage at key traffic intersections throughout the Town
- Midway entrance signs into Vinton lack character
- Intersection of Pollard Street and Virginia Avenue contains eyesores
- Lack of consistent signage

Greenway/Parks and Recreation/Youth Centers Issues

- Goode Park lacks a greenway connection to Mountain View Cemetery
- Town should maintain Wolf Creek Greenway
- No bathroom exists on Wolf Creek Greenway
- Lack of greenways throughout Town; Pursue the following greenway plans: Glade Creek, Tinker Creek, Wolf Creek Extension, Connections to the Vinton Business Center and Roanoke River Greenway



Economic Development Issues

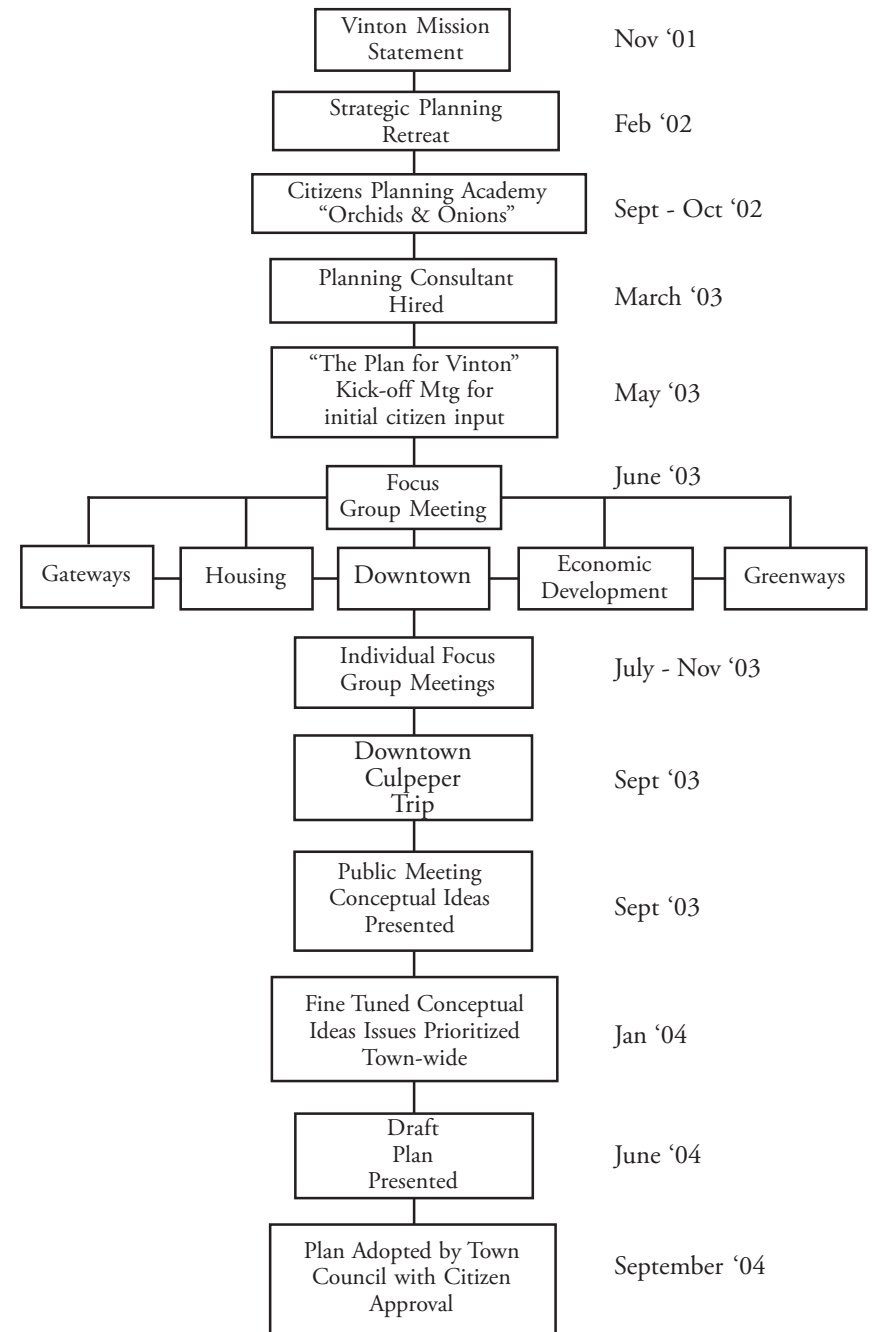
- Poorly defined Town Center with retail and entertainment
- Economic development expansion areas in Town are not linked to downtown via pedestrian paths
- Virginia Avenue and Pollard Street are poorly aligned
- Sidewalks are lacking in existing neighborhoods and some key corridors

Downtown Redevelopment Issues

- Lack of pedestrian traffic in the downtown
- Train station no longer exists and the Farmers' Market is underutilized in the downtown
- Poor façade design and lack of landscaping in and around downtown
- Wholesale florist distribution center is an inappropriate use in the heart of Vinton's downtown
- Buildings are in need of rehabilitation
- Lack of access to downtown from Hardy Road
- Historic Clover Creamery sign has not been maintained

Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Issues

- Narrow streets and lack of curb and gutter create safety hazards in Gladetown
- Virginia Avenue and Pollard Street intersection is a poor neighborhood entryway
- Infill development often times does not fit in with the existing neighborhood character
- Old school buildings remain underutilized within the neighborhoods
- Many older homes are in need of housing rehabilitation
- Lack of neighborhood organizations to speak to Town Council





Town of Vinton - Looking North



GATEWAY ENTRANCES / CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Vinton suffers from being somewhat lost and consumed by surrounding development, so much that it is difficult to determine where one jurisdiction ends and another begins. Some feel that appropriate improvements to key gateways and formal entrance corridors leading into the Town can effectively delineate where the Town begins even when landform and development appear unchanged. The objective is to create effective gateways that can provide a sense of arrival, signify an authentic community identity, and portray an inviting, distinctive Town image.

The Town of Vinton has five (5) main entrance points:

1. Washington Avenue (west)
2. Virginia Avenue (Route 24) (west)
3. Walnut Avenue (west)
4. Washington Avenue (Route 24) (east)
5. Hardy Road (Route 634) (east)

The Town of Vinton also has three (3) key intersections:

1. Virginia Avenue (Route 24) /Bypass Road (Route 24)/ Hardy Road (Route 634)
2. Bypass Road (Route 24) / Washington Avenue (Route 24)
3. Virginia Avenue (Route 24) / Pollard Street.

Comments from the Citizens Planning Academy and two community workshops substantiated the problem of no clear physical delineation between the City of Roanoke and the Town of Vinton. The similar development patterns, land use, subdivision characteristics, and obscured natural features undermines any sense of arrival or distinct identity. Opportunities do exist especially because of natural features (open space, waterways), infrastructure (lighting, landscaping, bridges, roadway designs), and significant structural forms to create the desired sense of place and identity.



Washington Avenue Gateway West

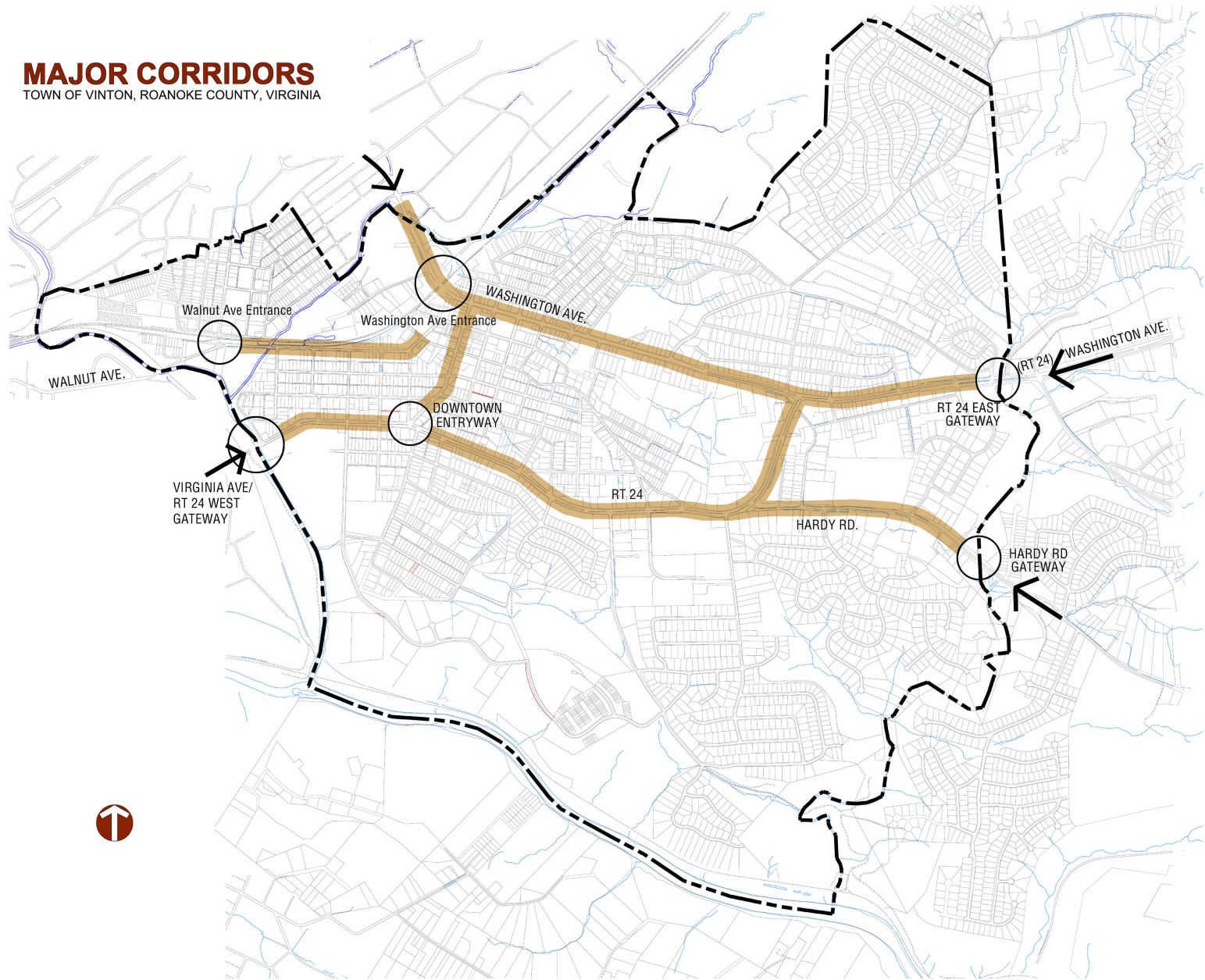
ISSUES

- There is no clear delineation between the Town of Vinton and the City of Roanoke due to similarities in land use, scale, and condition of buildings.
- There is no directional signage of any scale indicating the Town's location once you exit Interstate 581. Also there is a lack of good directional signage and a consistent design motif for Vinton's key civic buildings and places of interest including Town Hall, Vinton War Memorial, fire, police, rescue, museum, and downtown.
- No signage exist at the intersection of Route 460 and Gus Nicks Boulevard to identify and direct traffic eastward to the Town of Vinton or its downtown and historic neighborhoods.
- Entryway corridors are not clearly identifiable because of signage and limited landscape amenities. The signs on Gus Nicks Boulevard, Washington Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, and Hardy Road do not stand



MAJOR CORRIDORS

TOWN OF VINTON, ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA



out, blending into the surrounding area. Designs do not attract the attention of those passing by.

- Entrance corridors do not offer significant visual links to open space, important waterways, and other natural features that define the corporate boundary. Lighting and landscaping is limited at both the entrances and key intersections.



Washington Avenue (Route 24) East

- Pass-through commuters drive through Vinton on the way to work in Roanoke City, Roanoke County or Bedford County using Hardy Road, Washington Avenue, and Virginia Avenue (Route 24). The roads serve as high speed connector corridors. There is a high traffic volume of 20,000 vehicles/day largely during the morning and evening commute times.
- Several entrance bridges are unsightly, lacking any aesthetic qualities, often distracting from any value offered by the Town or any desired image.
- While signage is available at several entrances, the scale and colors should be enhanced, directional and informational signage incorporated, and vistas opened to showcase natural features and attractive architecture.

- There is a general lack of promotion of the Town as a “place”. The Town needs to showcase the amenities it has to offer such as antique shops, specialty shops, Farmers’ Market, public parks and museums, historic neighborhoods, trails and overlooks, natural vistas, and the downtown.

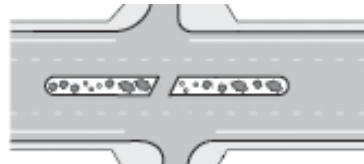


Town of Vinton Existing Signage



STRATEGIES

- Increase the prominence and visibility of the entrance signage as one enters and leaves the Town of Vinton.
 - Examine existing locations of entrance signage on Gus Nicks Boulevard, Washington Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, Hardy Road, and Walnut Avenue to determine the appropriateness of other locations such as the bridge on Gus Nicks Boulevard that leads to Washington Avenue.
 - Enlarge the size and mass of signs and add appropriate lighting for all entranceways into the Town.
 - Redesign landscaping and improve visual field around the monument signs to provide better site lines, greater color and year round texture.
 - Construct traffic calming measures at entrances such as landscaped medians, gradual roadway curves incorporating median signage when appropriate and adding additional landscaping along both sides of the roadway.
 - Redesign the intersection of South Pollard Street and West Virginia Avenue to improve both focus (visual and vehicular) and entranceway into the downtown area. Improve circulation by realigning Pollard Street into the downtown area and enhance the entranceway with lighting and greenspace.
- Design and implement an informational and directional sign system to provide easy navigation to Vinton's places of interest such as the Vinton War Memorial, library, museum, downtown, Town Hall, Farmers' Market, parks and greenway.



- Identify all places of interest in Vinton, which would be included on a sign.
- Examine existing informational signs such as those on West Virginia Avenue before the turn at Pollard Street to determine if they are located in the most appropriate places.



Directional and Informational Signs

- Choose a sign design standard and replace existing signs so that the selected design is used consistently throughout Town.

The idea behind the new signage is to provide a clear welcome sign as the motorist enters the Town. These welcome signs would display a symbol (such as the dogwood blossom) that could be repeated on smaller directional signs throughout the Town, thus creating a unified image. The sketches on this page show these concepts.



Entrance Sign

- Consider alternative corridor designs to slow traffic at the entrances and throughout Vinton so that the visitor physically senses a change has occurred from the City of Roanoke and that they have transitioned into a new and different place.



- Consider using raised crosswalks rather than speed bumps at key entrances and intersections. This allows for smooth traffic flow but has a slowing effect which promotes a safer, pedestrian friendly environment.
- Consider constructing raised medians or extended (“pinched”) and landscaped curbs in key locations to slow traffic.

PLANS OF ACTION

Washington Avenue (west) Entrance and Corridor

The Washington Avenue gateway on the northwest side of Vinton connects the Town with the City of Roanoke and has a tremendous potential to be redesigned and draw attention to it. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Using the bridge that crosses over the Norfolk Southern’s Railway as the focal point for those entering and leaving Vinton.
- ❑ Installing ornamental streetlights along the bridge that reflects a community standard for major entrance corridors and possibly the older downtown of Vinton.
- ❑ Adding hanging planters to the bridge’s proposed lighting enhancements.
- ❑ Creating a pedestrian walkway with attractive railing and banners across the bridge to improve pedestrian safety, access, and aesthetics.
- ❑ Any attractive fencing along the bridge should have identical color schemes with those in the downtown.
- ❑ Incorporating an entryway sign across the bridge above Washington Avenue.
- ❑ Utilizing standard lighting along designated sections of the entrance corridor to help define functional areas such as the downtown.
- ❑ Introducing uniform landscaping, planters, tree wells, and benches along Washington Avenue.

- ❑ Constructing sidewalks and decorative pedestrian crossings at key intersections along Washington Avenue

Hardy Road (Route 634) (east) Entrance and Corridor

Hardy Road is the second major entryway into the Town from Roanoke County. An existing bikeway follows the road and connects to the Wolf Creek Greenway. The entryway also leads into a key intersection at Virginia Avenue (Route 24) and Bypass Road (Route 24). Proposed improvements include:

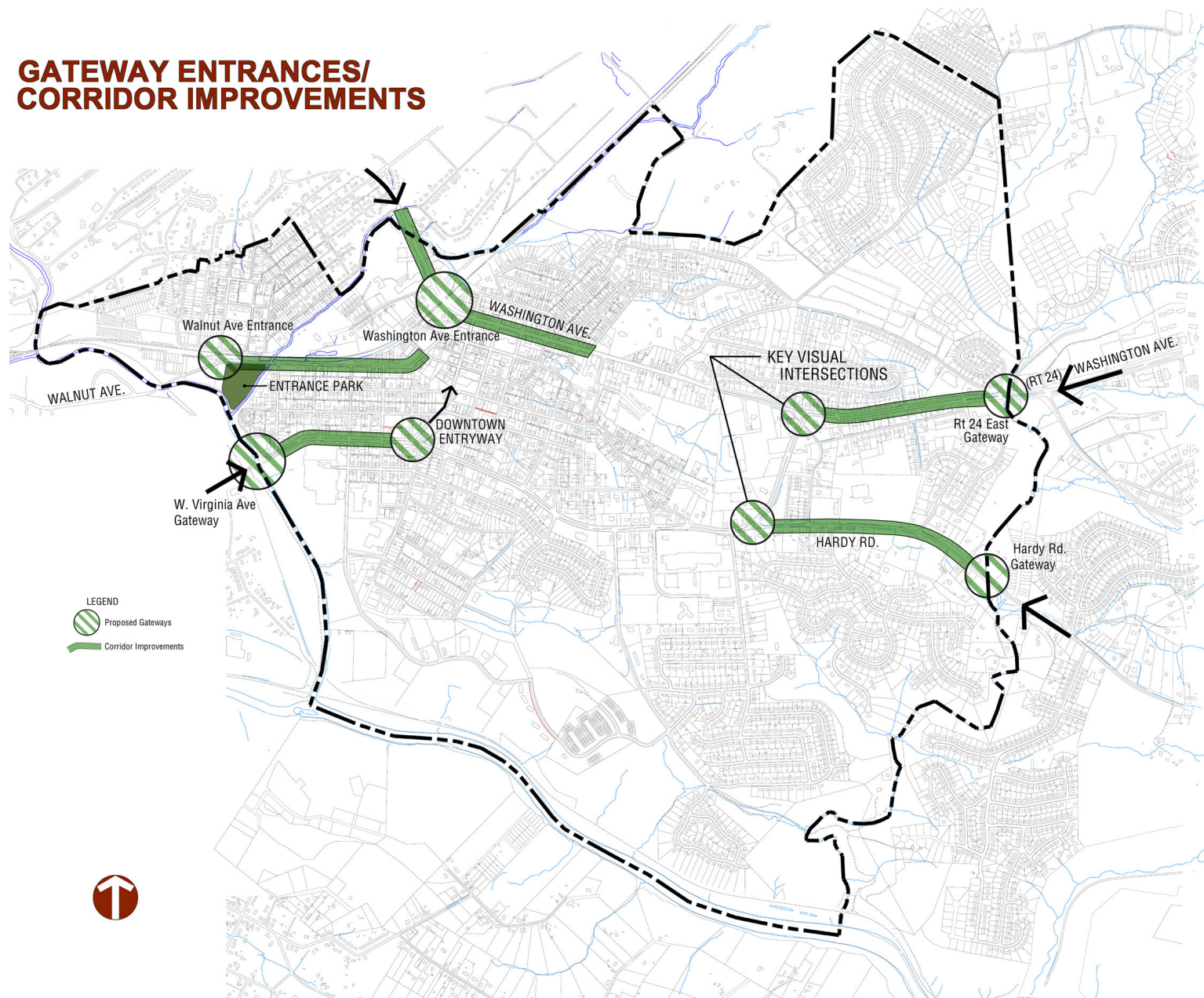
- ❑ New entryway signage adjacent to Hardy Road and Wolf Creek Greenway.
- ❑ Colorful year-round landscaping around the signage.
- ❑ Appropriate signage lighting to improve visibility during the night.
- ❑ Enhanced streetscape by planting trees and shrubbery.
- ❑ Entranceway enhancements to tie the proposed parking with the entryway into the Wolf Creek Greenway.



Hardy Road (Route 634) Entrance



GATEWAY ENTRANCES/ CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS



Virginia Avenue / Route 24 (west) Entrance and Corridor

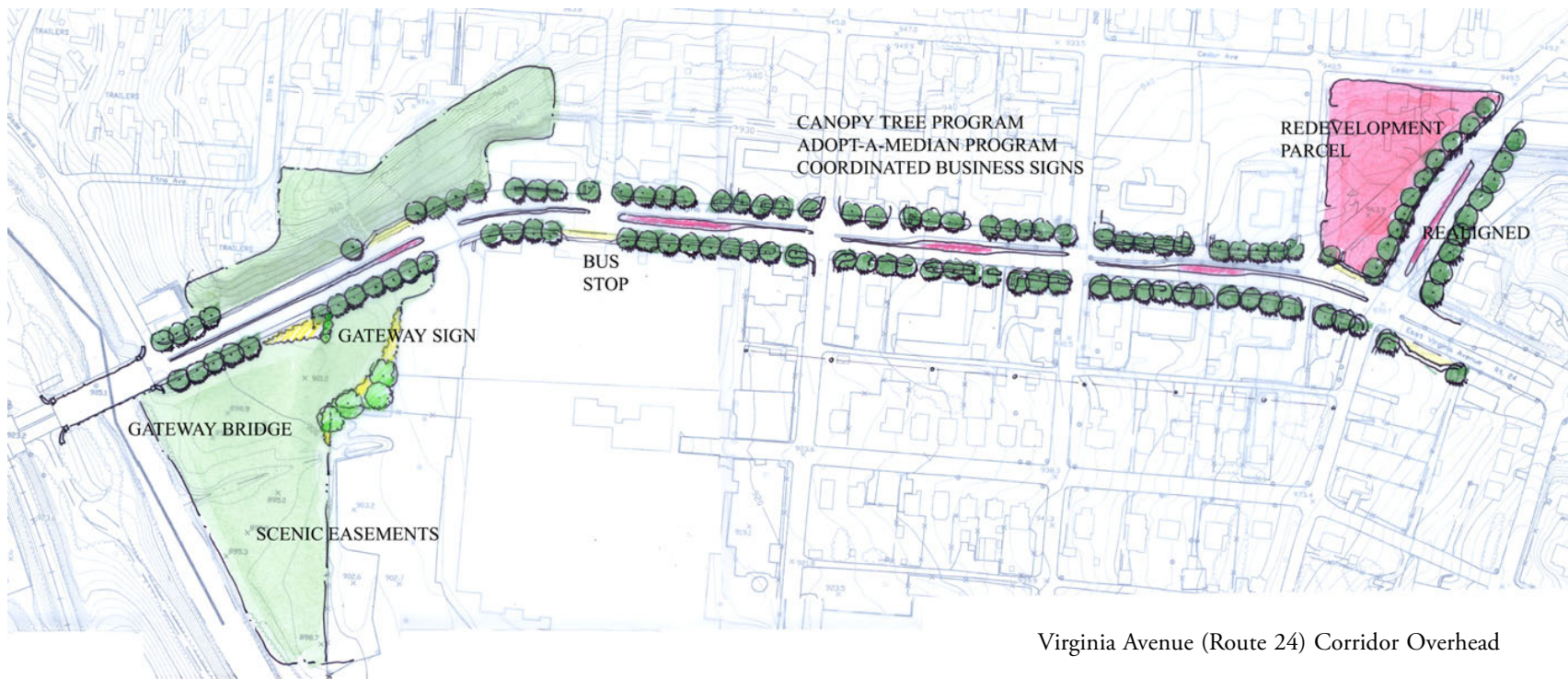
Virginia Avenue (Route 24) is one of three entryways on the west side of Vinton from Roanoke City. It is a high-speed corridor and is difficult to slow commuters long enough to recognize they have entered the Town of Vinton. This entryway leads into the downtown via the intersection at Virginia Avenue (Route 24) and Pollard Street. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ New gateway signage adjacent to the existing Tinker Creek Greenway.
- ❑ Colorful, year-round landscaping to increase eye appeal.
- ❑ Appropriate lighting for the sign to make it visible during the night.
- ❑ Continuous sidewalks lined with trees that present a design continuity.
- ❑ Landscaping, planters, tree wells, and benches along Virginia Avenue.

Washington Avenue / Route 24 (east) Entrance and Corridor

Washington Avenue (Route 24) is one of two major corridors through Vinton that continues from Roanoke County and leads into a key intersection at Bypass Road (Route 24) / Washington Avenue (Route 24). Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ New entryway signage adjacent to the existing Wolf Creek Greenway.
- ❑ Colorful, year-round landscaping around the signage.
- ❑ Appropriate signage lighting so it is visible during the night.
- ❑ Enhanced streetscape with trees and shrubbery.



Virginia Avenue (Route 24) Corridor Overhead



The bridge gateway sketch shows several concepts that will enhance its impact as an entry point to the Town. Stone piers and walls are incorporated into the ends of the bridge to increase its prominence as a gateway. The ornamental street lights with hanging baskets further distinguish the bridge. Utility lines are placed underground or under the bridge. The commercial establishment beyond the bridge on the left is screened by trees and the billboard in this area is removed.



Virginia Avenue (Route 24) Bridge Entryway



Virginia Avenue (Route 24) Bridge Entryway Concept



Walnut Avenue (west) Entrance and Corridor

Walnut Avenue is also located on the west side of Vinton and serves to connect neighborhoods from within the City of Roanoke to Vinton, specifically into Vinton's downtown area. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ New gateway signage at the intersection of Walnut Avenue and 8th Street.
- ❑ Colorful, year-round landscaping around the sign.
- ❑ Appropriate lighting on signage to increase visibility at night.
- ❑ Enhanced streetscape with trees and shrubbery.
- ❑ Permanent landscaped open space to the southwest of the entryway to enhance the area and provide a physical and visual link to proposed greenway along Glade Creek.
- ❑ Sidewalk, light fixtures, curb and gutter, and tree wells along Walnut Avenue leading into downtown.



Vinton's Major Corridors

FUNDING RESOURCES

Capital Improvements Program. Along with the funding sources listed below the Town of Vinton should incorporate the cost of gateway construction into the Town's annual capital improvement budget. These funds would serve to leverage federal and state financial assistance.

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA – 21). Once reauthorized by Congress, the Act will offer \$18 million in funding annually for Virginia to improve communities and create a more balanced transportation system that is intended for nontraditional transportation projects. Basic guidelines of the program include a minimum 20% local match of funds, conducting a public hearing, and endorsement by local government. Under the program a project is only eligible if it has a relationship to the surface transportation system and qualifies under at least one of the 12 eligible enhancement activities. Gateways in Vinton would be eligible under the Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification Category.



HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION

Maintaining the integrity of Vinton's neighborhoods and the quality of housing is an important strategy for the Town. Neighborhoods strive to have their own unique identity within the Town, an identity that reflects a sense of pride and represents a healthy, attractive, safe place to live. Strong neighborhoods serve as the foundation for a strong community. Vinton should support and enhance its neighborhoods through new infill housing, application of neighborhood design standards and appropriate signage, improved infrastructure, and the rehabilitation/preservation of any deteriorating housing stock in the Town's older areas.

The Town of Vinton has two distinct residential types:

- Older established neighborhoods located in close proximity to the downtown area.
- Newer suburban style subdivisions located farther away from the downtown area on the eastern side of Town.

The five older neighborhoods dating back to the 1900's were identified having varying degrees of deficiencies both with housing and infrastructure. These areas are important because of their historic and architectural character, location and their place in the earlier years of Vinton's residential settlement and neighborhood formation. Specific housing and neighborhood needs were identified during field surveys by K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. in 2003. Findings are summarized on the accompanying map. Citizen comments from the 2001 Survey for Downtown Vinton, 2002 Citizens Planning Academy Homework Summary, and the two community workshops indicate that the residents are concerned with the quantity and quality of the housing stock, as well as the potential demise of individual neighborhood identities.

GENERAL ISSUES

- Vinton's neighborhoods contain deteriorating housing.
- Infill opportunities should be examined in older neighborhoods such as Cleveland, Vinyard, Midway, Jefferson Park, and Gladetown.

- There appears to be a large demand for rental property throughout the Town, which may be an issue where older, larger homes, that could be candidates in establishing a historic district designation, are being converted into apartments.
- Subdivisions and neighborhoods are not clearly identified with entrances or gateways including appropriate signage.
- Homeownership has been significantly declining in older traditional areas.
- Vinton has a need for elderly housing and assisted living facilities.
- General nonconforming uses are inappropriately located within or adjacent to neighborhoods.
- Poor drainage and periodic flooding contributes to high maintenance.
- In some residential areas, streets are too narrow and deteriorating

Housing Conditions

A summary of housing conditions in the five (5) priority neighborhoods is based on windshield surveys in Fall 2003 using the following definitions:

Sound: No deficiencies

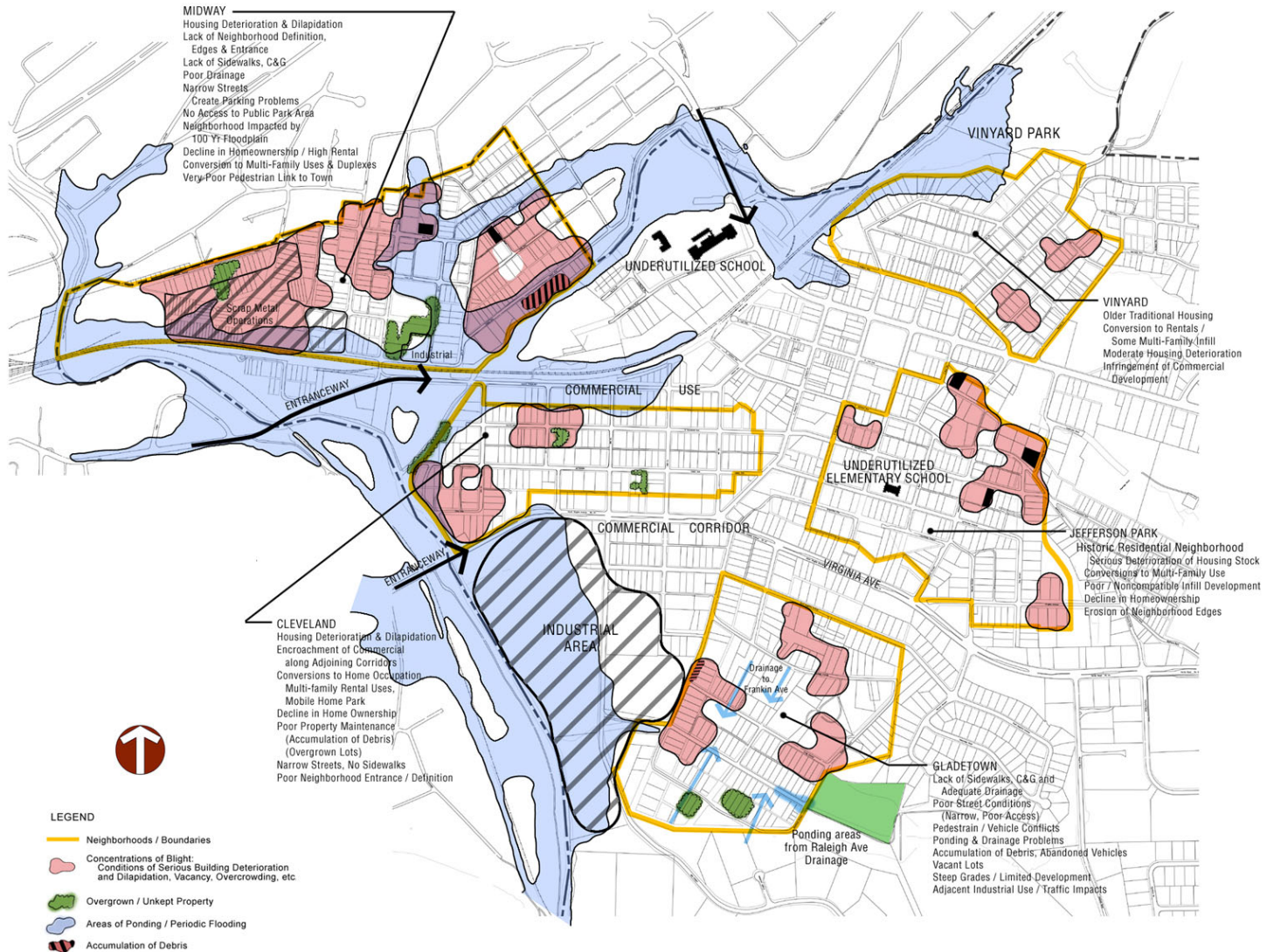
Minor Deficiencies: Repairs beyond regular maintenance

Major Deficiencies: Deteriorating with one or more intermediate defects

Dilapidated: Major deficiencies requiring substantial rehabilitation

Substantially Dilapidated: Unsuitable for rehabilitation warranting clearance





NEEDS ASSESSMENT

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM
TOWN OF VINTON, ROANOKE COUNTY, VIRGINIA



Cleveland (West part of Vinton)

The edges of this neighborhood are in a declining condition, particularly along the rail corridor, adjacent to the downtown area and along the Virginia Avenue (Route 24) corridor because of non residential use intrusions and poor property maintenance.

- There are some conversions of larger houses to multifamily use identified along Jefferson Avenue.
- Homeownership and housing conditions are deteriorating.

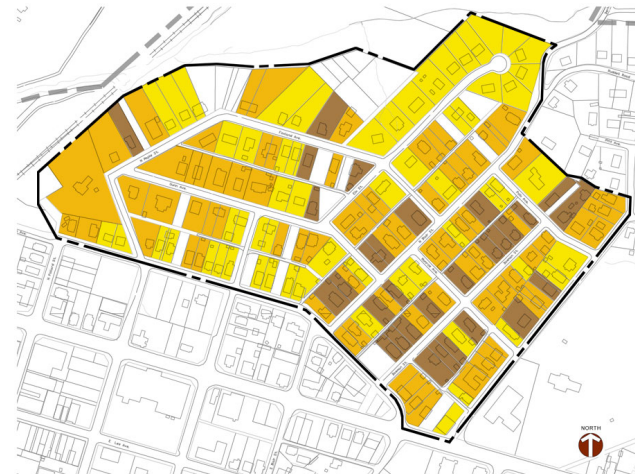


- The Town needs to investigate ways to allow for mixed uses but preserve the architectural fabric.
- Neighborhood edges lack definition and any special amenities.

Vinyard (Northern edge of Vinton)

A strong traditional working class neighborhood of varied architectural housing styles. Housing conditions are deteriorating especially on the eastern side.

- Pedestrian access is poor, with little connection to local parks and greenway.



- Historic vernacular housing is being lost. Zoning regulations fail to preserve the older housing stock within the neighborhood.

Midway (Northwest corner of Vinton)

The neighborhood is isolated in the northwest across from the Norfolk Southern Railway adjoining Roanoke City and the industrial uses to the southwest. Housing conditions are poor, especially near the industrialized area.



- There is a need to stabilize homeownership and improve the overall condition of the housing stock through rehabilitation.
- There is limited access into the rest of Vinton, largely confined to Walnut Avenue.
- Multiunit infill housing development throughout the neighborhood created undesirable densities.
- There is lack of pedestrian access to recreation facilities at nearby Gearhart Park or into the downtown.
- Poor transition/buffers separate residential from the neighboring industrial uses, thereby creating nuisance problems.
- Limited continuity with architectural styles.
- No sense of neighborhood edges or center.

Gladetown (South of Virginia Avenue)

Established African-American neighborhood experiencing deteriorating housing and infrastructure located near larger industrial uses to the west and separated from other traditional neighborhoods by Virginia Avenue.

- Neighborhood contains several narrow streets (18' width) and poor access (pedestrian and vehicular) to other areas.
- Deteriorating houses are located next to brand new homes. There is a general lack of continuity in age, style or condition and units are adversely affected by adjoining commercial - industrial activity.
- The area is served with the Craig Avenue Recreation Center and a neighborhood park. These are the only such facilities in Town and largely underutilized by the rest of Vinton's citizens.

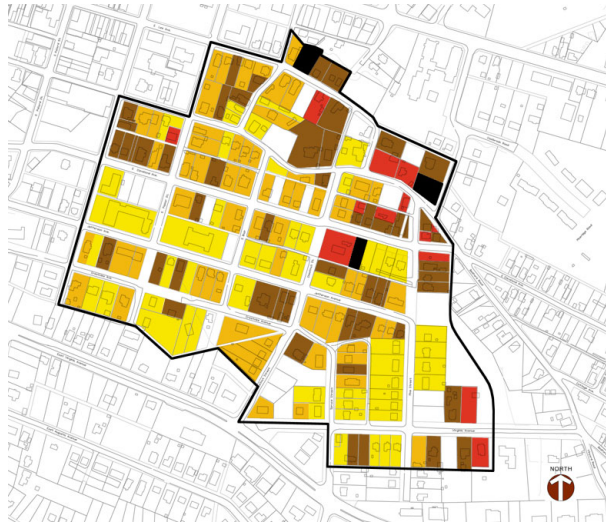


- Poor drainage characterizes the southern end of the neighborhood where southern and northern slopes converge contributing to ponding and erosion problems.
- Water and sewer lines are undersized, thus creating water pressure, fire flow issues and sewage backup. The neighborhood also lacks sidewalks and crosswalks, creating safety issues.
- The stability of portions of the neighborhood has been undermined because of natural flood disasters and the lack of housing reinvestment.
- A large number of vacant/underutilized lots are located along Pollard and Chestnut Streets.

Jefferson Park (Adjacent to downtown, north of Virginia Avenue)

The oldest of the more traditional neighborhoods offering a variety of housing styles and potentially historic property located in the center of Town adjacent to the downtown.





- There is a preponderance of poor housing conditions of the larger residential structures and architecturally significant buildings reflecting the financial inability of many owners to maintain property.
- Many larger residences have been converted to duplexes from once more stately single-family homes, often to the demise of the building's character.
- Serious deterioration is affecting the stability of the housing stock.
- Zoning does not afford any historic property protection or incentives for preservation/restoration.
- These are missed opportunities to utilize the neighborhood as a gateway into the adjoining downtown.
- Tree lined streets and sidewalks fail to provide desirable pedestrian connections within the neighborhood or to adjoining community centers.

EXISTING HOUSING CONDITIONS Traditional Neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD						TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	
Midway	13	37	88	19	2	159
Gladetown	35	42	29	14	1	121
Jefferson Park	47	61	51	11	2	172
Vinyard	55	69	29	0	0	153
Cleveland	30	61	46	3	0	140
TOTAL	180	270	243	47	5	745

The table above is a summation of housing conditions in the five (5) traditional neighborhoods. Existing housing conditions were ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 with (1) being sound condition and (5) being dilapidated, warranting clearance.

These neighborhoods exhibit the most critical needs for immediate attention in Vinton. Strategies and proposed plans of action to address each neighborhood's deficiencies are described on the following pages. The remaining housing stock throughout Vinton is largely in good condition. Through proper maintenance and upkeep the existing housing stock can remain stable and serve Vinton citizens.

STRATEGIES

- Formally recognize, promote, and improve Vinton's long-standing, established neighborhoods as a Town resource.
 - Develop revitalization programs for five (5) neighborhoods including Vinyard, Midway, Gladetown, Jefferson Park, and Cleveland.
 - Assist in formation of neighborhood advisory committees/groups with a local representative who will become an active participant in the neighborhood improvement programs.



- Conduct historic assessments (Cleveland, Vinyard, and Jefferson Park) to determine the eligibility of neighborhoods and individual houses within each area for state and local historic designation or as a contributing property that may help promote the area's character.
- Delineate historic walks, link to Town activity centers and provide unified signage and promotional materials.
- Develop standards and authorize funding for neighborhood improvements such as sidewalks, streetlights, and signage.
- Develop street tree planting programs for selected streets.
- Provide needed Town capital improvements for storm drainage, utility and street improvements and buffers/landscaping that serve to bring them up to community standards.
- Acquire the Roanoke County Career Center (Old William Byrd High School) and convert into an assisted living facility or elderly housing.
- Utilize Low Impact Development practices to address runoff throughout the Town.
- Promote infill housing opportunities within individual neighborhoods and provide financial incentives to encourage private investments.



Characteristic Neighborhood Infill Housing



The infill housing sketch shows a style of house that conforms to the style of the neighborhood even though it is a two-family (duplex) dwelling. Street trees have been planted along the sidewalk with off-street parking located to the side or rear of the structure.

- Seek State and Federal funding to assist in neighborhood revitalization, especially in lower income family areas.
 - Pursue revitalization of traditional neighborhoods in a holistic approach that improves housing and infrastructure, and encourages private reinvestment and preserves and enhances the architectural character of the area.
 - Target vacant land, underutilized lots, and parcels with development potential within individual neighborhoods.
 - Vinyard – along East Madison Avenue.
 - Cleveland – along Jefferson and Cleveland Avenues.
 - Midway – King Street and Dale Avenue.
 - Gladetown – along Pollard and Chestnut Streets.
 - Jefferson Park – along Chestnut Street and East Cleveland Avenue.
 - Identify upper-story housing development opportunities (existing or conversion) in Vinton's downtown area along Washington, Lee, and Jackson Avenues. Solicit business owner participation in Historic Tax Credit and other State and Local financial assistance programs for mixed use development. Provide regulatory and financial incentives such as rehabilitation incentives, fee waivers for construction permits, and establish low interest loan programs for property owners to upgrade upper-story floors for residential purposes.
- Support housing preservation and neighborhood revitalization with park additions and greenspace along corridors and at key locations including gateways.
 - Vinyard – create entryways into Vinyard/War Memorial Park from within the neighborhood.
 - Cleveland – utilize the vacant parcel to the east of the neighborhood as a potential area for a park.
 - Midway – create an entryway into Gearhart Park by utilizing the vacant land on Tinker Avenue. Create a buffer on 10th Street for the industrial area.
 - Gladetown – utilize abandoned wastewater treatment plant as a possible park site and/or the vacant lots along Pollard Street as a park area/buffer.
 - Jefferson Park – Develop pedestrian greenways/walks to connect with key activity centers throughout the Town.



Cleveland Neighborhood Housing Preservation



- Identify potential urban trail routes (separated bike/pedestrian paths) connecting satellite neighborhood parks to other larger municipal recreation facilities and parks such as Vinyard Park; and to the Roanoke Valley regional trail or greenway systems.
- Maintain a balanced level of rental property, encourage rent to own conversions and create affordable home ownership opportunities to accommodate a variety of income groups, housing types, and special needs, including elderly and handicapped.
 - Encourage second floor residential units in commercial zones.
 - Designate and design transitional zones around the downtown area to serve as buffers between non-conforming adjacent areas.

PLANS OF ACTION

Each of the five (5) traditional neighborhoods have various local historic significance. They are located on the western portion of Town around the downtown and Norfolk Southern Railway (see Location of Traditional Neighborhoods Map, Exhibit O). Each neighborhood reflects the ongoing evolution of Vinton and its housing characteristics.

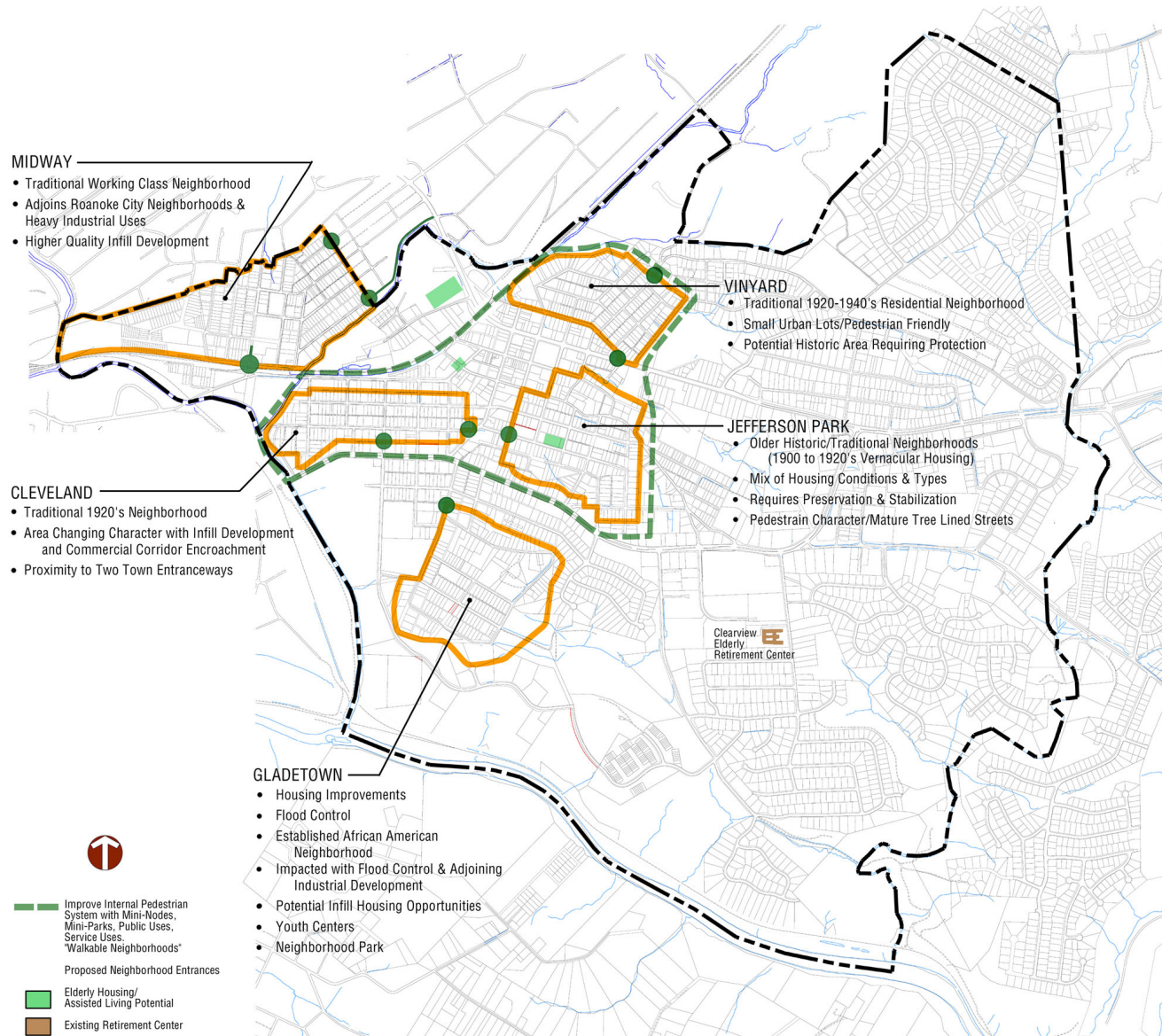
1. Midway. The neighborhood is located on the far western portion of Vinton and borders the Norfolk Southern Railway. It is a traditional working class neighborhood adjoining Roanoke City.
2. Cleveland. The neighborhood lies between Vinton's higher-speed corridors, Virginia Avenue (Route 24) and Walnut Avenue which is one of five (5) main entryways into the Town. The neighborhood is a traditional 1920s neighborhood adjacent to Vinton's downtown.
3. Jefferson Park. Jefferson Park is the oldest historic neighborhood with 1900-1920's vernacular housing, complimented with a variety of other compatible housing types. The neighborhood directly adjoins Vinton's downtown and offers a unique pedestrian character.



Appropriate Infill Housing Designs - Gladetown Neighborhood

4. Gladetown. The neighborhood is an established African American settlement with traditional 1950s-1960s residential architecture. Gladetown is the only residential area with a local park to provide for its recreational needs. Also, Craig Avenue Recreation Center is adjacent to the neighborhood on the east.
5. Vinyard. Vinyard is a 1920s-1940s traditional residential neighborhood that contains small urban lots and a friendly pedestrian character. The neighborhood is reasonably well preserved, located to the north of Washington Avenue, near Vinyard Park, and the War Memorial Park.





LOCATION OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM



PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The five (5) neighborhoods offer a uniqueness and many of their original characteristics should be retained and problems within each neighborhood addressed. The following constitute the proposed improvements recommended for each:

1. Midway. Approximately 69% of Midway's housing stock is showing signs of deterioration and dilapidation according to a windshield survey conducted by K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. Only 8% of the housing stock is in sound condition. Also, a decline in homeownership is a major problem within the neighborhood with rental units constituting more than 55% of all units. Supporting infrastructure, especially streets, are not up to community standards. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Housing Rehabilitation Program - Provide financial assistance to restore both owner occupied and investor owned housing.
- ❑ Acquisition and demolition of substandard vacant dwellings "unsuitable for rehabilitation" to remove blight and create opportunities for single family infill.
- ❑ Removal of debris and other blighting factors throughout the neighborhood.
- ❑ New infill single family housing development through down payment assistance programs, below market rate financing programs and partnerships in land assemblage.



Residential Structure -
Midway Neighborhood

- ❑ Installation of public drainage facilities and curb and gutter to better manage runoff from heavy rainfalls.
- ❑ Widened neighborhood streets to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- ❑ A formal neighborhood entrance at the corner of Walnut Avenue and 8th Street with appropriate landscaping and neighborhood signage.
- ❑ Two neighborhood entrances, along King Street and Tinker Avenue, at the Town's limits with signage, landscaping and lighting.
- ❑ A neighborhood park located on Town property along Tinker Avenue with a connecting bridge over Glade Creek to Gearhart Park and a proposed greenway along the creek.

Gladetown. Approximately 36% of Gladetown's housing stock is showing signs of major deterioration. Streets and storm drainage continue to be the major infrastructure needs. Gladetown is located adjacent to large industrial areas which contribute to the physical and economic conditions of the neighborhood. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Housing Rehabilitation Program - Assistance to improve housing to minimum housing quality standards.
- ❑ Acquisition and clearance of substandard dwellings unsuitable for rehabilitation to eliminate blight throughout the neighborhood.
- ❑ Removal of debris, especially along Pollard Street.
- ❑ New single family infill housing development throughout the area to provide homeownership opportunities.
- ❑ Installation of improved drainage and curb and gutter to better manage runoff from heavy rainfalls on Giles Avenue.
- ❑ Widening of Giles Avenue to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- ❑ A formal neighborhood entrance on the corners of Pollard Street and Raleigh Avenue with appropriate landscaping surrounding it.

Jefferson Park. Approximately 37% of Jefferson Park's housing stock is showing signs of deterioration and dilapidation according to windshield surveys conducted by K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. Jefferson Park is



adjacent to Vinton's downtown and has seen a decline at its neighborhood edges. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Housing Rehabilitation Program - To restore the housing stock, appearance, safety, and character of the neighborhood. Concentrated effort are needed on and near the intersection of East Jackson Avenue and Pine Street.
- ❑ A local historic district with design standards that are appropriate for the preservation of the neighborhood's character.
- ❑ Application for State Historic Designation and provision of Virginia Historic Tax Credits
- ❑ Established Conservation District to help regulate the quality of infill housing development in the neighborhood and the removal of blighted structures.
- ❑ A formal neighborhood entrance with signage and landscaping at the corner of Maple Street and Jefferson Avenue.
- ❑ Acquisition of Roland E. Cook School from Roanoke County to adaptively reuse for potential elderly housing or assisted living facility.
- ❑ A landscaped buffer connecting the neighborhood and the adjoining downtown commercial uses.
- ❑ Tree lined streets and sidewalks providing improved pedestrian links with activity centers in Town.

Cleveland. Approximately 35% of Cleveland's housing stock is showing signs of deterioration and dilapidation according to windshield surveys conducted by K.W. Poore & Associates, Inc. Because of Cleveland's proximity to key entranceways into Vinton, the neighborhood suffers from business encroachment and associated nuisances. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Widen Glade Road and Etna Avenue to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- ❑ Acquisition of substandard properties to eliminate blight and substandard housing conditions within the neighborhood especially along Glade Road, 5th Street, and Etna Avenue where the mobile home park is located.

- ❑ Installation of curb and gutter and adequate storm drainage to help mitigate flooding throughout the western part of the neighborhood.
- ❑ Two neighborhood entrances, along 3rd Street and West Virginia Avenue (Route 24), and at the intersection of Cedar Avenue and Pollard Street.
- ❑ Zoning regulations to reduce conversion of large single-family residential homes into multifamily dwellings or mixed-use structures.
- ❑ A local historic district with design standards that are appropriate for the preservation of the neighborhood's character.



Residential Structure -Cleveland Neighborhood

Vinyard. Approximately 19% of Vinyard's housing stock is showing signs of deterioration and dilapidation according to windshield surveys. The neighborhood is in the best condition of the five (5) areas with approximately 81% of the housing stock in sound condition or having only minor deficiencies. Proposed improvements include:

- ❑ Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program - To preserve character and quality of housing stock.
- ❑ A local historic district with design standards that are appropriate for the preservation of the neighborhood.
- ❑ Two neighborhood entrances with landscaping and signage, along Washington Avenue and East Madison Avenue, and at the intersection of Ruddell Avenue and North Blair Street.



- ❑ Enhanced property maintenance to preserve the neighborhood and prevent further deterioration.



Residential Structure - Vinyard Neighborhood

FUNDING RESOURCES

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD).

The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides funding to eligible units of local government through a competitive grant process to address community development needs including housing and infrastructure. CDBG funds are made available to VDHCD by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the spring of each year, Community Improvement Grant (CIG) applications are due to VDHCD for funding consideration for specific project types:

- Neighborhood Revitalization (CCD)
- Economic Development
 - Business district, job creation, site development, development readiness
- Housing - Rehabilitation, Housing Production
- Community Facilities
- Community Services Facilities

To further refine and develop a target area, the Town can apply for a Project Planning Grant under the CDBG program to study a particular project such as a neighborhood requiring revitalization because of conditions. Upon completion of the planning grant a Community Improvement Grant application is submitted to DHCD to formally apply for capital funding to improve the targeted neighborhood.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta (FHLBA). FHLBA offers a variety of affordable housing opportunities through its partnerships with member financial institutions. The Affordable Housing Program (AHP) provides deeply subsidized loans and grants to homebuilding and rehabilitation projects and is an excellent source of additional funding for revitalizing Vinton's older neighborhoods. FHLBA's First-time Homebuyer Program (FHP) offers down-payment and closing cost assistance to low- to moderate-income (LMI) families seeking to become homeowners. The FHP is an invaluable resource that Vinton can use to stabilize neighborhoods through increased homeownership rather than rentals.

The Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA). VHDA helps Virginians obtain safe, affordable housing for LMI families that would otherwise be unaffordable. The Authority provides single-family homeownership programs and conducts award-winning, comprehensive classes statewide, to educate first time homebuyers on the steps needed to own a home and create a more knowledgeable consumer. Multifamily mortgage loans are also available for developers for rental projects for low- and moderate-income tenants. VHDA programs include:

- First Time Homebuyers Programs
 - SPARC, FHA Plus, Fixed Rate Mortgages
- Flexible Alternate Loan Programs
- Home Improvement Loan Program
- Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)
- Section 8 New Construction
 - Substantial and Moderate Rehabilitation
- Virginia Housing Fund - Take out loans for new construction, rehabilitation



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA Rural Development program offers financial assistance for LMI families in a number of ways to pursue homeownership and rehabilitation. These programs include the Homeownership Loans (Section 502) Direct Loan Program in which the Rural Housing Service offers direct financial assistance to LMI individuals and families with home loans at an affordable interest rate. Under the Single Family Loan Guarantee Program, Rural Housing Services guarantees loans made by private sector lenders to enable LMI individuals to qualify for home loans. The mutual Self-Help Housing Program makes homes affordable by requiring future homeowners to help build their own homes. The Home Repair Loan and Grant Program (Section 504) assists LMI families who are in need of home repairs they cannot afford by offering grants and loans at manageable interest rates.

Assistance is also available for multifamily housing under the Housing Preservation Grants (Section 533), Rural Rental Housing Loans (Section 15), and the Guaranteed Rural Rental Housing Program. Assistance can come in the form of loans, grants and interest reduction payments for the repair and rehabilitation of rental properties, the purchase/repair or construction of new multifamily housing for low-income families, and guarantees to financial institutions for loan losses.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) offers funding to Certified Local Governments in the form of grants for a variety of uses. Such uses include surveys of architectural resources and preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations for Vinton heritage resources. Grant funds from DHR can also be used to train and educate Vinton's Architecture Review Board and aide in the development of programs and materials to assist the Board in carrying out its daily functions. The rehabilitation of publicly owned buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and public education programs concerned with local resources and any of the broad benefits associated with heritage stewardship program are grant eligible.

Non-Profit Housing Corporations

Various nonprofit housing corporations, community assistance agencies and housing authorities serve the metropolitan area and provide financial and technical assistance with affordable housing, housing development and services

toward moderate income persons and special needs groups. Some of the more active are listed.

Community Housing Partners Corporation (CHPC)

- Multifamily property development
- Single-family housing construction, rehabilitation
- Housing for special needs populations
- Homeownership and housing counseling

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc. (RCAP)

- Low interest loans - gap financing for housing and economic development
- Indoor Plumbing Program (IPR)

Virginia Community Development Corporation (VCDC)

- Housing Equity Funds and Historic Equity Fund I
- Virginia Community Development Fund (VCDF) serves as financial institution for affordable housing development efforts

Blue Ridge Housing Development Corporation (BRHCC)

- Serves as Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)
- Affordable housing/homeownership programs
- Homebuyer counseling
- Loan administrator - Single Family Regional Loan Fund
- Economic development ventures - revitalization projects

Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA)

- Administers Section 8 Housing Vouchers Program
- Community development activities for residential to commercial to industrial development including both redevelopment (clearance and new construction) and conservation (preservation of existing structures) projects

Habitat for Humanity, Inc.

- Provision for affordable housing in partnership with homeowners



GREENWAYS/PARKS & RECREATIONS/YOUTH CENTERS

Parks, open space, trails, and greenways are significant community amenities that increase the quality of life for the citizens by providing natural areas away from the urban landscape while serving the Town's recreational needs. In addition, facilities for the Town's youth are inherently beneficial to the fabric of a healthy community providing venues for recreation, education, and social interaction.

Existing facilities include four large parks, two greenways, and a recreational facility (see Greenways/Parks/Youth Centers Map, page 28).

1. War Memorial Park
2. Gearhart Park
3. Goode Park (located in Roanoke County)
4. Vinyard Park (located in Roanoke County)
5. Wolf Creek Greenway (located in Vinton and Roanoke County)
6. Tinker Creek Greenway (located in Roanoke City)
7. Craig Avenue Recreational Center

Citizen comments from the 2001 Survey for Downtown Vinton, 2002 Homework Summary of the Citizens Planning Academy, and the two community workshops indicate a need for a more extensive park system that would serve to connect greenways and provide greater support of youth activities.

ISSUES

- There is limited access to the underutilized skateboard park.
- The Roanoke County Career Center (Old William Byrd School) auditorium is underutilized and does not serve any particular community needs.
- The trail/greenway system is complete only on the eastern edge of the Town, from Hardy Road to Stonebridge Park in East Roanoke County.
- There are no neighborhood parks except in Gladetown.

- Access to the Roanoke River in Vinton is not available.
- Internal pedestrian access routes or trails to neighborhoods and activity centers in Town is almost nonexistent. Adequate signage is not always available to mark the existing trail/greenway system.

STRATEGIES

- Recognize the need for youth activities and develop an infrastructure of parks, trail/greenway, and recreation facilities to support this need.
- Create accessible neighborhood parks to serve as focal points within individual neighborhoods.
 - Vinyard – Create easily identifiable greenways to connect with the War Memorial Park along Meadow Street and Vinyard Park along Foxland Avenue.
 - Cleveland – Utilize the vacant lot to the west as a potential park site that will also serve as a buffer to the adjacent industrial area. In the southeastern portion of the neighborhood, a small park should be created beside Wachovia on Cedar Avenue.
 - Gladetown – Utilize the abandoned wastewater treatment plant to the west of the neighborhood for a community park.
 - Midway – The vacant land on 10th Street can be converted into a neighborhood park to serve as an additional buffer between the adjacent industrial area. The Town's property along Tinker Avenue can be converted into neighborhood park.
 - Jefferson Park – Create a neighborhood park on vacant land near the corner of Chestnut Street and Virginia Avenue to serve as a buffer for the neighborhood.



- Utilize schools and private organization facilities to help meet public recreation needs. The following schools can help to serve as a focal point for various sections of the Town and provide for recreational programs and activities program needs after the school day has ended (playgrounds, gymnasium).
 - Herman L. Horn Elementary School
 - W.E. Cundiff Elementary School
 - Roland E. Cook School
- Encourage local industries and businesses to sponsor youth events, purchase uniforms, and help with neighborhood cleanups.
- Develop a greenway system that provides natural environments and opportunities for comprehensive, multiuse trails for transportation, recreation, education, and fitness.
 - Create multipurpose trails that connect to neighborhoods, parks, schools, downtown, and other community amenities.

- Encourage citizen involvement in the development of the greenway system and work with Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission to coordinate efforts in providing a comprehensive regional trail system.



Wolf Creek Greenway

PLANS OF ACTION

Proposed Greenways

Although Vinton is almost entirely built up, the possibility for the expansion of greenways exists throughout the Town because of undevelopable land along stream, valleys, and ridgelines. New greenways and bikeways can serve to connect the Town with existing greenways in Roanoke County and Roanoke City providing a continuous network throughout the region (see Greenways/Parks/Youth Centers map on page 28).

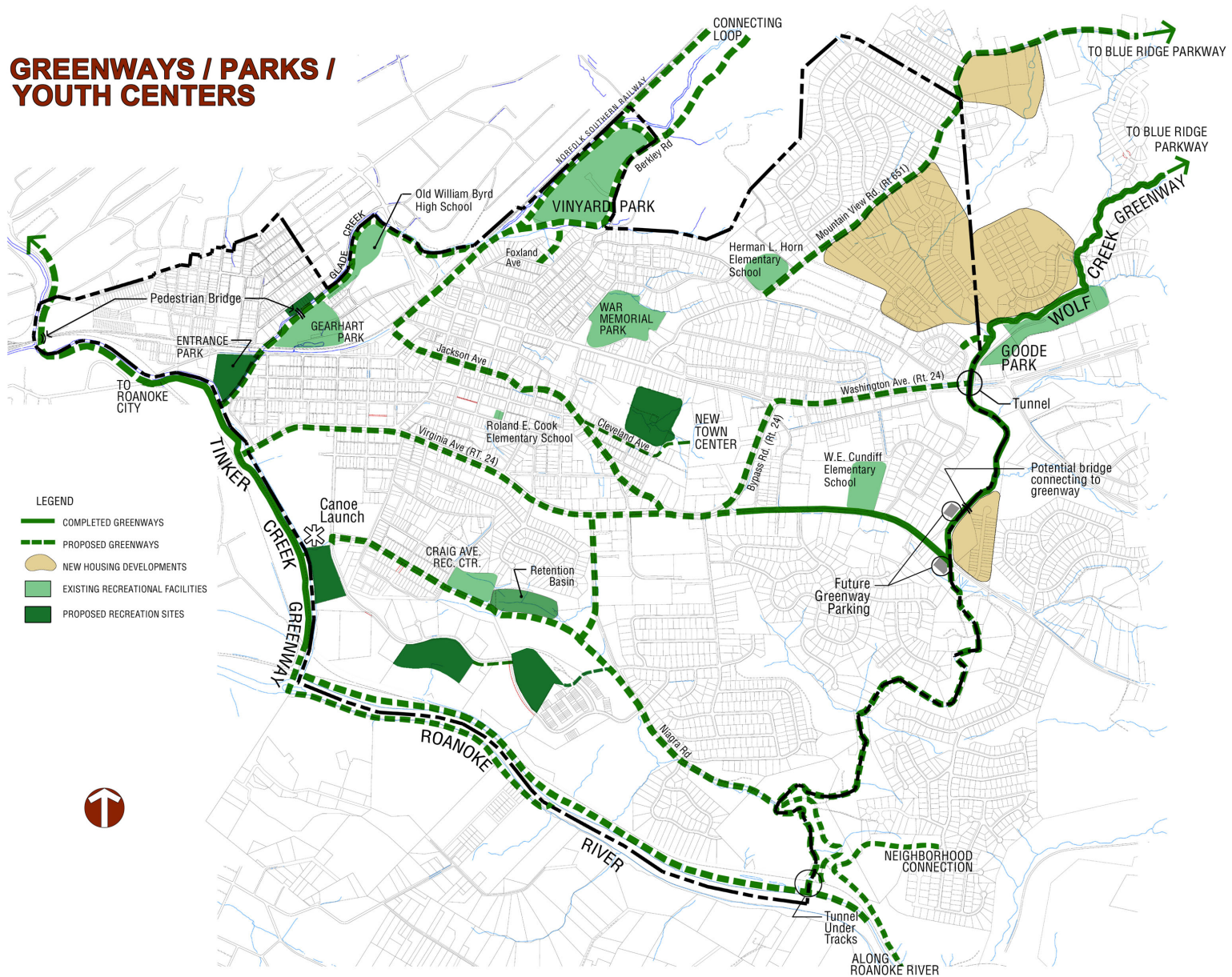
Extension of the existing Wolf Creek Greenway is proposed along Virginia Avenue (Route 24) to Vinton's western limits connecting to Tinker Creek Greenway. The greenway improvement would serve as both a pedestrian trail and bikeway with the Virginia Avenue Bikeway connecting by way of Bypass Road (Route 24) to Washington Avenue (Route 24) and continuing east to Wolf Creek Greenway. The proposed Virginia Avenue Greenway connection would also provide access to Jackson Avenue and continue northwesterly through the Jefferson Park neighborhood to downtown Vinton. Downtown could be physically linked with Vinyard Park and continue into Roanoke County with the extension of this trail.

Also, proposed is a connection between Virginia Avenue and Niagara Road south, continuing along Niagara Road northwest to connect with the proposed greenway and recreation facilities behind the Craig Avenue Recreational Center. This potential multiuse greenway behind the center would continue westward crossing through the Gladetown neighborhood along Franklin Avenue and terminate at Tinker Creek and a proposed canoe launch. Eastward the greenway would follow Niagara Road and connect to the proposed extension of Wolf Creek Greenway.

A major improvement on the east side of Vinton involves the expansion of the Wolf Creek Greenway. The trail should be extended to the south from Hardy Road following the eastern Town limits to the Roanoke River connecting to a new greenway along the Roanoke River at Vinton's southern boundary continuing westward to complete a loop to the Tinker Creek Greenway.

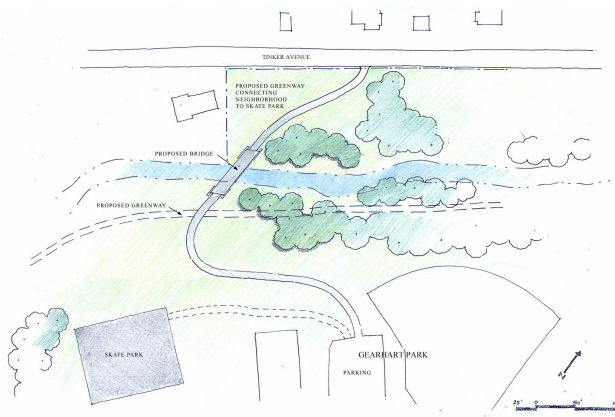


GREENWAYS / PARKS / YOUTH CENTERS



Another proposed greenway begins at the intersection of Ruddell Road and Mountain View Road (Route 651) at the Herman L. Horn Elementary School, and continues northeast along Mountain View Road into Roanoke County providing a link to newly constructed single-family subdivisions.

Also, the Tinker Creek Greenway can be connected to Gearhart and Vinyard Parks via a greenway behind Glade Road along Glade Creek and the western border of the Cleveland Neighborhood. From there, the greenway would follow the Creek to the Town boundary providing access to Gearhart Park continuing northeast to Vinyard Park and northward along Berkley Road into Roanoke County. This proposed greenway would be accessible to the Vinyard neighborhood through a small connecting trail on Foxland Avenue.



Proposed Greenway and Bridge Adjacent to Gearhart Park

Tinker Creek Bridge

The bridge provides access to Gearhart Park and the proposed Glade Creek Greenway from the surrounding neighborhood. This offers improved recreational access for the Town's residents.

Trail Features

1. Tunnels and bridges to provide uninterrupted flow.

2. Combination trail and bicycle path separated from vehicular traffic.
3. Vistas/overlooks.
4. Rest Areas.
5. Signage:
 - a. Directional
 - b. Educational
 - c. Mile Posts
6. Materials:
 - a. Hard surface for cycles.
 - b. Chip, ash/cinders, and gravel for walking areas.

Proposed Recreational Facilities/Youth Centers

The potential for new large recreational areas throughout Town are limited because of the Town's built-up character. Land is only available along ridges and isolated areas. Seven (7) proposed new sites that should be developed in the future for recreational purposes are:

1. 3rd Street Park – located along 3rd Street across from Vinton Public Works Facility.
2. Hampton Park – located at the intersection of 3rd Street and Wyndham Drive between the Northampton and Southampton apartment complexes.
3. Industrial Park – located along 3rd Street on the old sanitary landfill site.
4. New Town Park – located behind the proposed New Town Center.
5. Walnut Park - located on Walnut Avenue at the Town's western boundary.
6. Midway Tot Lot - located along Tinker Avenue and Glade Creek.
7. Dogwood Green - located in Downtown Vinton.





The greenway concept sketch shows a portion of the greenway as it passes through a commercially developed part of town. The proposed concept utilizes a wider easement between the roadway and adjacent parking lots so that the greenway can wind closer to and further away from the road with a planted area on either side.

The seven (7) proposed sites listed above were selected for recreational and youth facilities for a variety of reasons including:

1. 3rd Street Park
 - ❑ Proximity to Craig Avenue Recreational Facility.
 - ❑ The Town of Vinton already owns a large parcel of land at the proposed site.
 - ❑ The proposed site has an existing canoe launch that can be further developed for recreational purposes.
 - ❑ The site is located along a proposed greenway.
2. Hampton Park
 - ❑ Proximity to two large residential complexes (Northampton & Southampton).
 - ❑ One of the last large vacant parcels within the Town.
 - ❑ Will buffer the apartment complexes from the nearby industrial uses.



Hampton Park Site



- ❑ Offers a scenic view overlooking the Town.
- ❑ Suitable for auxiliary buildings for youth and recreational facilities.

3. Industrial Park

- ❑ Large parcel located within Vinton.
- ❑ The site cannot be structurally developed.
- ❑ Suitable adaptive reuse for an old landfill, including Par 3 golf course.

4. New Town Park

- ❑ Located immediately west of the proposed New Town Center.
- ❑ Vacant land surrounding a Town water pump station.
- ❑ Gently sloping land connected to Town Center with a vista.
- ❑ Proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- ❑ Adjacent to proposed greenway connecting the New Town Center with Vinton's downtown.

5. Midway Tot Lot

- ❑ Town of Vinton already owns the land.
- ❑ Located in a floodplain unsuitable for development.
- ❑ Serves as a pedestrian link to Gearhart Park/Vinton Skate Park.

6. Walnut Park

- ❑ Prominent visible entry point from Roanoke City.
- ❑ Large parcel located within a floodplain.
- ❑ Suitable for gateway modifications to distinctly identify Vinton.

7. Dogwood (Downtown) Green

- ❑ Serves as a focal point for Vinton's downtown.
- ❑ Potential to serve large volumes of pedestrians in the downtown.
- ❑ Location for community gatherings.
- ❑ Proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- ❑ Attract pedestrian shoppers into downtown.

The addition of greenways, recreational fields, and youth facilities throughout Vinton will provide residents with additional means of transportation townwide. Also, the greenways will connect Vinton's downtown to surrounding neighborhoods and create a more pedestrian friendly character. The facilities will improve accessibility and utilization of Vinton's recreational areas and youth facilities, current and proposed. Operation and maintenance for all of the proposed greenways, recreation, and youth facilities within Vinton should be maintained by the Town's Public Works Department as opposed to Roanoke County.

FUNDING RESOURCES

Capital Improvements Program along with various Federal and State funding resources listed below, the Town should incorporate the cost of greenways/ bikeways/trails, recreational facilities and neighborhood parks into the Town's annual Capital Improvements Program budget. Particular emphasis and priority should be placed in funding in support of associated land acquisition needed for future recreation and trail facilities.

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA – 21) offers \$18 million in federal funding annually to Virginia's communities through Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to improve communities and create a more balanced transportation system. Funds are intended for nontraditional transportation projects. Basic guidelines of the program include a minimum 20% local match of funds, public hearings, and endorsement by local government. Under the program a project is eligible only if it has a relationship to the surface transportation system and qualifies under at least one of the 12 eligible enhancement activities. Greenways in Vinton would be eligible under the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities category.

There are other additional funding resources available for parks and greenways including:

- ❑ **The Department of Conservation and Recreation** provides funds through its Virginia Recreational Trails Grants.



- ❑ **The National Park Service** offers money through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program to provide matching grants to State and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
- ❑ **Kodak Greenway Grants** through its conservation fund to be used for greenway planning.
- ❑ **Private Foundations:**
 - Beirne Carter
 - Virginia Environmental Endowment for Planning (VAEE)
 - National Tree Trust – grants for trees and landscaping along greenway trails
 - Foundation for the Roanoke Valley
- ❑ **Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** – 303B grant provides funding to impaired waterways (potential along the Roanoke River and Wolf Creek).
- ❑ **Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program Grants** – used for green aspects of trails.
- ❑ **Flood Hazard Mitigation Grant** – used for land acquisition.
- ❑ **Army Corps of Engineers.**
- ❑ **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).**
- ❑ **National Trails Money** – must connect a trail to Blue Ridge Parkway land.
- ❑ **Tax Credits** for conservation easements.

The [Virginia Bicycling Facilities Resource Guide](#) distributed by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) lists a number of funding sources available for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Federal-Aid Highway Program

These funds may be used for noted highway related construction projects such as pedestrian, bicycle paths, and handicapped facilities.

- ❑ **National Highway System:** Construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the National Highway System including interstate highways.

- ❑ **Surface Transportation Program (STP):** Construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use and walking.
- ❑ **Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing Program:** Addresses bicycle and pedestrian safety issues including a survey of hazardous locations, projects on any publicly owned bicycle or pedestrian pathway or trail, and any safety-related traffic calming measure.
- ❑ **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program:** The construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or non-construction projects (such as maps, brochures, and public service announcements) related to safe bicycle use.
- ❑ **Recreational Trails Program:** Construction of an assortment of trail projects (motorized, non-motorized, mixed use).
- ❑ **Federal Lands Highway Program:** Available for pedestrian and bicycle trails in conjunction with roads, highways, and parkways.
- ❑ **National Scenic Byways Program:** Construction of a facility along a scenic byway for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ❑ **Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants:** Available to support projects designed to transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from employment.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

As Vinton continues to grow and land is consumed and becomes more of a premium, alternative measures of growth must be examined. For Vinton to prosper, future expansion within the community has to involve redevelopment and new investments through the utilization of commercial infill opportunities in strategic locations.

Vinton contains approximately 3.2 square miles, with the majority of the land already built-up. The Town is characterized with strip commercial uses along major arteries, often only partially or poorly utilizing the land. The Town seeks economic development, but lacks suitable open tracts of land. The principal commercial corridors are located along Route 24/Virginia Avenue/Hardy Road and Washington Avenue. They are well established and handle significant daily traffic volumes that constitute a potential customer base. Future growth depends on redefining the role of Vinton as a commercial destination. This can only be accomplished through better utilization of commercial infill opportunities.

ISSUES

- Vinton is approximately 85% developed and has a lack of suitable vacant land for new growth and expansion.
- Vinton has difficulty attracting and retaining viable businesses throughout the Town, which has resulted in scattered vacant buildings and underutilized parcels.
- Neither Vinton's citizens nor adjoining County and City residents shop within the Town for the majority of their major goods and services, which deprives the Town of both sales tax and personal income.
- Vinton lacks well-defined commercial districts, apart from downtown, that serve as a focal point for retail and business activity. Instead, retail and business activity is scattered along corridors and intermingled with other uses, often poorly separated from residential areas.

STRATEGIES

- Capture a greater percent of disposable income in the primary market area. Being 85% developed can be advantageous to the Town.
 - Utilize existing corridors, support infrastructure and buildings to generate new business development and expansion.
 - Vacant buildings are available along Virginia Avenue, Hardy Road, and in the downtown area.
 - Prime buildings exist on Hardy Road and on Washington Avenue near the Town's eastern border with Roanoke County.
 - Walnut Avenue also contains building space for general commercial purposes.
 - The adaptive reuse of large vacant buildings may be appropriate for smaller business usage and better serve the Town.
- Identify infill building opportunities that can be generated through redevelopment and rehabilitation.
- Consider a regional perspective for cultivating new industries in the area. Develop a partnership with Roanoke City and Roanoke County to showcase the area's prospective sites for industrial growth.
- Identify and maintain industrial sites.
- Define transitional areas between residential neighborhoods and general commercial that would serve to minimize the intrusion of nonconforming uses into residential areas and stabilize commercial use and character through design standards.



- Rezone areas of Town to incorporate transitional mixed use zones where general commercial adjoins residential areas. Areas for consideration include:
- Midway – along the southern and western neighborhood boundaries where industrial and general commercial uses are located.
- Cleveland – especially along Walnut Avenue and Glade Road.
- Gladetown – along the western boundary which borders general commercial and light industry along Pollard Street.
- Jefferson Park – along portions of the southern and western boundaries that connect with downtown.
- Vinyard – along the southern edge which borders Washington Avenue and the downtown area.
- The Town of Vinton should formalize the Town’s economic development functions in order to expand its customer base and attract new businesses. An Economic Development Director should:
 - Identify what local citizens can support in terms of businesses that offer a better mix of goods and services.
 - Support promotional cost sharing advertising between the Town and any economic development organization.
 - Establish a matching grant program for façade improvements and landscaping in targeted areas to support local business improvements and an improved image of business in Vinton.
 - Develop unique marketing programs for shopping opportunities in the Town, such as the antique mall.

- Expand and promote special events to be held at different times of year to draw people to business locations, such as downtown and shopping centers along Hardy and Bypass Roads.
- Support a downtown “Main Street” director to attract business, assist with redevelopment and promotions within the area.

PLANS OF ACTION

Proposed Economic Development Program

Staff and Formal Associations

The initial step for Vinton is to hire a full time economic development coordinator that also can serve as the downtown “Main Street” coordinator. This individual would facilitate and drive Vinton’s economic development activities by implementing the following duties:

- ❑ Organize an economic development advisory team consisting of local government officials, businesses leaders, and Town residents that are proactive advocates of economic development in Vinton.
- ❑ Create private/public partnerships to further development of targeted properties.
- ❑ Secure economic development funding, coordinate the work, and streamline communication among different local, state, and federal agencies including surrounding localities.
- ❑ Build strong partnerships between political jurisdictions and private entrepreneurs to assist in bringing new employment and investment opportunities into the region.
- ❑ Serve as a mediator for resolving problems and concerns between various stakeholders and localities.
- ❑ Develop marketing resources to assist Vinton in promoting private investment and business development.
- ❑ Bring stakeholders of all interests to the bargaining table to support communication efforts and help mediate various points of view on particular projects.



- ❑ Provide accurate up-to-date economic and demographic information on Vinton to prospective developers, property owners and businesses.
- ❑ Help develop business plans for new or expanding commerce.
- ❑ Assist merchant association in planning and promoting Town events to increase awareness.

The Town should support the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce that would serve to promote Town businesses and market goods and services in a cost effective manner. The economic development coordinator would assist the association supported with Town resources. Distinctive benefits made available to businesses would include:

- ❑ Creation/organization of additional festivals and planned events for merchants who are members of the association to draw visitors to Vinton's commercial areas.



Annual Bluegrass Festival

- ❑ Creation and distribution of a brochure to showcase each individual merchant.
- ❑ Creation of a webpage providing information about the association in general, the businesses that are part of the association, and maps to identify individual businesses and public parking facilities.

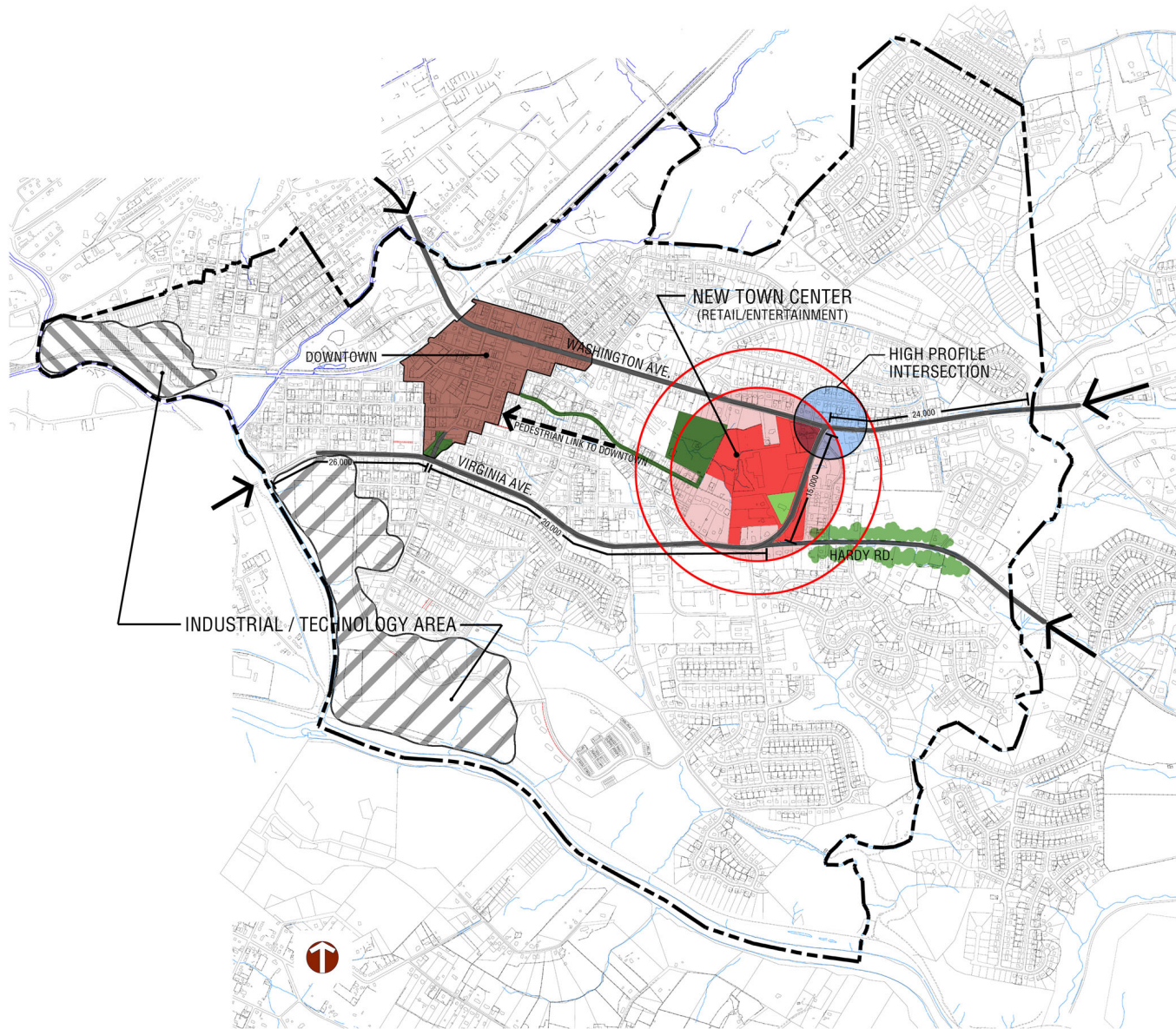
- ❑ Inclusion in publications focusing on the merchants of Vinton.
- ❑ Development of façade design and sign standards to promote uniformity among specialty merchant areas, addressing window displays, color schemes, storefronts, etc.

Streetscape standards also should be implemented to enhance commercial areas and include consideration for design continuity in trash receptacles, benches and street lighting, and appropriate landscaping and tree species to enhance pedestrian character and a friendly shopping environment.

The downtown coordinator/economic development coordinator should invite local business owners to public forums and assist them in mapping out procedures, for an association, and assurances that they are on solid legal and financial footing. The National Center for Nonprofit Boards is a valuable resource that can assist in the formation of such an association within Vinton and provides some basic guidelines and steps to getting started including:

- ❑ Determining the purpose of the organization.
- ❑ Form a board of directors.
- ❑ File articles of incorporation.
- ❑ Draft bylaws.
- ❑ Develop a strategic plan.
- ❑ Develop a budget and resource development plan.
- ❑ Establish a record keeping system for the organization's official records.
- ❑ Establish an accounting system.
- ❑ File for an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) determination of federal tax exempt statue.
- ❑ File for state and local tax exemptions.
- ❑ Meet the requirements of state, county, and municipal charitable solicitation laws.
- ❑ Obtaining an employer identification number from the IRS.
- ❑ Registering with the state unemployment insurance bureau.
- ❑ Applying for a nonprofit mailing permit from the United States Postal Service.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Economic Development Plan

NEW TOWN CENTER

Vinton possesses a unique opportunity to develop a New Town Center between the intersections of Bypass Road / Washington Avenue and Bypass Road / Virginia Avenue. Sufficient land is available to support a large commercial center strategically located at the primary crossroad of major arterials serving Vinton and parts of Roanoke County.

This site is highly visible and currently served by corridors with over 24,000 vehicles daily. Given the continued residential development east toward the Blue Ridge Parkway, traffic is expected to only increase. Also, the associated, disposable income of households in Vinton and growth in Roanoke - Bedford County, suggest this location already partially developed with commercial enterprises, is ideal for a planned commercial center. In order for this to move forward, the Town at a minimum, should assist in a public-private venture that addresses the following:

- ❑ Formation of a development corporation composed of key property owners, businesses, and the Town.
- ❑ This corporation would serve as the driving force between the Town and property owners for assemblage of land, the development of the proposed New Town Center, and commitments of prospective businesses.
- ❑ Development of preliminary conceptual designs for a New Town Center along Bypass Road (Route 24).
- ❑ Development of a recreational area behind the New Town Center connecting the Center with a pedestrian link to downtown through Jefferson Park.
- ❑ Identify support infrastructure needs to help generate the private investments.

Other Economic Development Actions

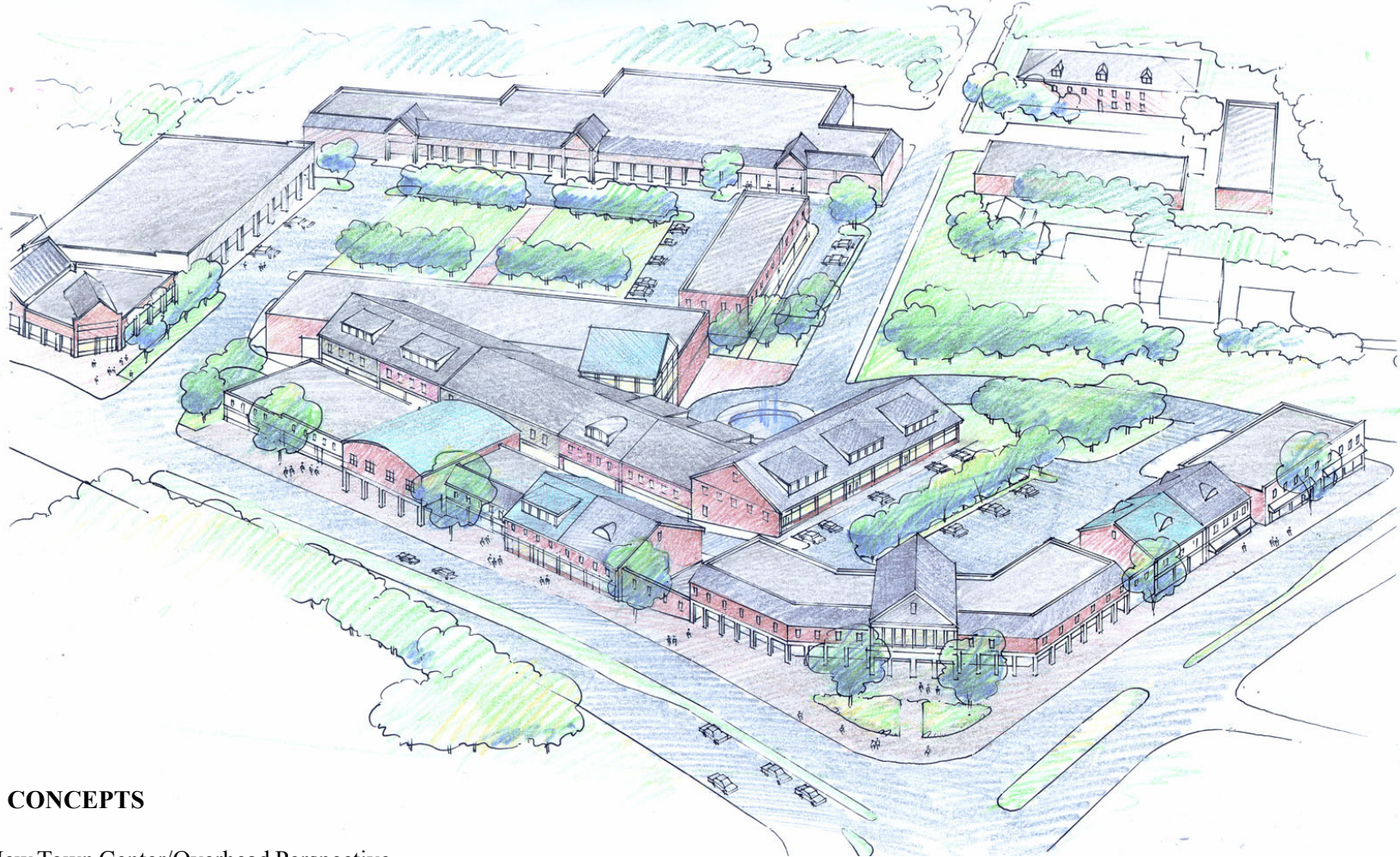
- ❑ Solicit new businesses into Vinton with various enterprise incentives targeting vacant buildings along Route 24 and Washington Avenue.

- ❑ Acquire and renovate the large vacant building on the eastern edge of Town along Washington Avenue (Route 24) into smaller units to create a small business incubator for start-up businesses.
- ❑ Offer a matching grant and loan program through a Merchants Association for a Façade Improvement and Commercial Rehabilitation program to assist local businesses in rehabilitation and facade enhancement. Provide design assistance to ensure compatible architectural character.
- ❑ Encourage use of historic tax credits to reduce renovation cost for eligible properties.



Proposed Site for New Town Center





DESIGN CONCEPTS

- New Town Center/Overhead Perspective

The building uses in the new town center include larger scale retail, entertainment, business, and upper story residential. The buildings encompass several town greens that serve as public activity centers. Parking is hidden from the main roadways, but is accessible by multiple entrances, and are located around the green, internally within the center. Shade trees, lighting and water features around the parking areas soften the visual impact of parking lots and accent pedestrian promenades. The architectural elements would include storefronts and colonnades providing a pedestrian oriented environment reminiscent of more traditional commercial areas.



FUNDING RESOURCES

The Virginia Department of Business Assistance (VDBA). VDBA is an excellent resource that helps businesses during start-up to get off the ground and continue to grow over the years. The agency would provide access to business problem solving, workforce training, and other such amenities for local businesses within Vinton. The Virginia Small Business Development Center Network (VSBDC) is an excellent resource for providing information and services such as economic and business data, a resource library, site location analysis, marketing assistance, and specialized training workshops. These resources will help small businesses within Vinton by making adequate resources available to them to help in their success.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). DHCD encourages regional economic competitiveness to further economic growth and offers several avenues to achieve this. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program offers competitive grant funds for economic development under four different activities;

- ❑ Job Creation and Retention
- ❑ Entrepreneurship Development
- ❑ Economic Environment Enhancement
- ❑ Development Readiness

These four activities can provide Vinton with a variety of avenues to further its economic development objectives through the assistance of grant funds which are awarded on a competitive basis annually. Funding can assist with land assemblage, public infrastructure improvements such as parking, utilities, public space, and adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings.

Economic Environmental Enhancement can be best utilized by Vinton through business district revitalization and site redevelopment. Business district revitalization will assist the Town in eliminating physical and economic blight within a designated commercial center or corridor to remove hazardous conditions and halt de-investment. Site redevelopment will aid the Town in

restoring land that was previously unmarketable or unusable thereby encouraging reinvestment on the site and those surrounding it. Grant money is also available under the Virginia Enterprise Initiative (VEI) for nonprofit organizations who work directly with entrepreneurs to obtain assistance and capital to start a small business.

Capital Improvements Program should incorporate the cost of economic development activities into the Town's annual Capital Improvements Program budget. Particular emphasis and priority should be placed in funding in support of Vinton's New Town Center.

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA – 21) offers \$18 million in federal funding annually to Virginia Communities through VDOT to improve communities and create a more balanced transportation system. Funds are intended for nontraditional transportation projects. Basic guidelines of the program include a minimum 20% local match of funds, public hearings, and endorsement by local government. Under the program a project is eligible only if it has a relationship to the surface transportation system and qualifies under at least one of the 12 eligible enhancement activities. These categories can be utilized to bring additional funds to the table in conjunction with economic development activities to enhance commercial corridors.

Industrial Development Authority (IDA) - Borrowing capacity and business loan capabilities of the IDA can serve as vehicles for the Town to carry out economic projects improving land and building acquisition and public improvements.



DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT

The Town of Vinton has a small downtown consisting of approximately ten (10) blocks. Washington Avenue, Walnut Avenue, and Pollard Street are the major access roads serving the downtown area. The railroad and Glade Creek form the western edge, with Jefferson Park and Cleveland neighborhoods identifying the south and eastern limits of downtown.

The area is characterized with a mixture of one- and two-story commercial and public use structures that front on a traditional grid layout. The majority of the area has sidewalks, some limited street lighting, benches, and a few street trees. Town Hall, Police and Fire/Rescue have a significant presence. Other public improvements include the Farmers' Market. Also, medical structures appear to be evolving as an important land use element. There are several uses located in the heart of the downtown that are considered incompatible with a traditional downtown. These include a floral wholesale business, Universal Metal Works, and several large structures used for storage. Other uses on the periphery include a wide mix of service/retail located in converted residential structures. Several vacant buildings and lots constitute a potential for creative infill development.



Downtown Aerial facing Southeast

Citizen comments from the 2001 Survey for Downtown Vinton, 2002 Citizens Planning Academy Homework Summary, and the two community workshops indicate that the downtown commercial core could benefit from needed physical enhancements, a more compatible mix of land uses, and a central focus point which would serve as a center and present a sense of place for downtown.

ISSUES

More specific issues were identified from field surveys, by Architects and Town Planners, and by the Downtown Citizen Committee.

- Vinton's downtown has large surface parking lots, poorly landscaped encompassing sizeable ground level footage.
- Vinton's downtown lacks sufficient lighting and consistent landscaping/signage, in particular along the main streets of downtown; Washington Avenue, Pollard Street and side streets such as Lee Avenue.



Downtown Storefront



- The three major entrance corridors into downtown Vinton are poorly defined; Gus Nicks Boulevard (west), Washington Avenue (east), Pollard Street (south), lacking any sense of arrival.
- Vinton’s downtown lacks a central focal point or activity center such as a town square or green or large prominent or historic structure.
- While deterioration of downtown commercial structures is not significant, many buildings lack architectural character or continuity with adjacent uses and signage provides little consistency.
- Downtown Vinton contains inappropriate single-family residential structures along the railway on Walnut Avenue. Transitional/mixed use areas need to be established along the edge of the downtown area to provide a buffer for residential neighborhoods.
- The edges of Vinton’s downtown are not well defined. There is a need for a more distinct transition from downtown into adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- The downtown lacks compatible upper floor apartments over commercial storefronts to help create after-business hours activity. This needs to be addressed along Washington Avenue and its side streets.
- Restricted access, poor sense of arrival into the downtown, limited visual connections, and heavy commuter traffic flow are problems on Gus Nicks Boulevard, Washington Avenue, and Pollard Street.
- Activities and uses along West Lee Avenue need to be compatible with and visually and economically support the Farmers’ Market.
- The downtown contains several large wholesale, light manufacturing and general commercial uses in inappropriate locations that are considered incompatible for a traditional small downtown core. These include wholesale, metal crafters, and a large auto dealership.

- Store frontage along the north side of Washington Avenue is largely converted residential and facades needing improvement. The street is used as a heavily traveled corridor through Vinton into Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Bedford County, and is designed with limited calming features to capture potential customers.

STRATEGIES

- Formally identify and delineate a “Downtown (Central) Business District.”
 - Create a Downtown Merchants Association to focus on issues of revitalization and economic restructuring, including better promotion of the downtown area and its businesses, improvements to public space, and design considerations.
 - Take advantage of being an affiliate of the “Virginia Main Street” program and utilize their resources to effectively promote downtown and improve its economic viability.
 - Revisit the zoning districts to consider adopting a transitional zone to be located a half block off the central business district, which would identify the allowable uses in a “periphery zone” between the central business district, and adjoining residential districts. Promote office and park uses with appropriate landscaping as effective buffers along entryways into residential neighborhoods.
- Realign and relocate the Virginia Avenue and South Pollard Street intersection to improve turning movements and access to the downtown. This improvement could contain directional signage, landscaping and turning lanes to the downtown, and key public facilities: Farmers’ Market, Town Hall, Library, and the Vinton War Memorial.
- Redesign Washington Avenue from the Town’s limits traveling through the downtown area from a boulevard style corridor to one with raised,



tree-lined, landscaped strip in the middle with brick paver crosswalks and decorative lighting.

- Identify and improve entranceways as well as possibly modify street and curb design to slow and/or reroute “thru” traffic.
- Provide sidewalks with tree wells along the north and south sides of Washington Avenue.
- Identify a location for the development of a public Town Green or a Town Common to serve as a central focal point for civic and downtown activities.
 - Conduct an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties or nonconforming uses in the downtown to help determine what opportunities are available to assemble land to develop the Town Green.
 - Develop schematic design concepts of the Town Green with multiple functions that would serve to revitalize the area.
 - Consider functional space such as a pedestrian mall along West Lee Avenue.
 - Solicit and support specialty shops and cafes with outdoor seating. Gazebo/stage for outdoor civic events and improvements with water features, a lawn setting, and gardens.
- Provide for visual continuity within the downtown.
 - Examine the possibility of relocating and improving land needs for the Vinton Motor Company from their downtown property location to another site in Vinton along Washington Avenue.
 - Promote upper floor housing above downtown storefronts and in transitional areas to increase long-term vitality in Vinton’s downtown and benefit local business.

- Add and improve pedestrian friendly amenities, for example sidewalks, benches, public open spaces, public art, and mini parks to make downtown a visitor’s destination.

- Consider ways to achieve a better transition of land uses between the downtown and adjoining neighborhoods, churches, and schools.
- Consider ways to better utilize the land and add more downtown business space (infill opportunities).
- Offer better design and pedestrian/bicycle path links to the downtown.

PLANS OF ACTION

Vinton desires to define, enhance, and anchor its downtown by creating a central focus and encapsulating public activity. This creatively includes mixed uses such as housing opportunities, retail and service, entertainment, government and public functions. All these activities contribute to civic pride, a sense of identity, and economic viability. The following recommended actions and public improvements serve as a foundation for continued growth and an enhanced identity for the downtown.

Proposed Downtown Redevelopment Program

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) offers a Virginia Main Street program of which Vinton is currently an affiliate locality. Vinton should further its status under the program and become a designated locality. Towns and cities across Virginia have been successful using this method which focuses on a four point approach to revitalization and sustainability:

- ❑ **Design** – Improving and creating new physical elements to the downtown.
- ❑ **Organization** – Building stronger partnerships with a variety of stakeholders to manage revitalization efforts.
- ❑ **Promotion** - Marketing goods and services and developing a positive image for downtown.

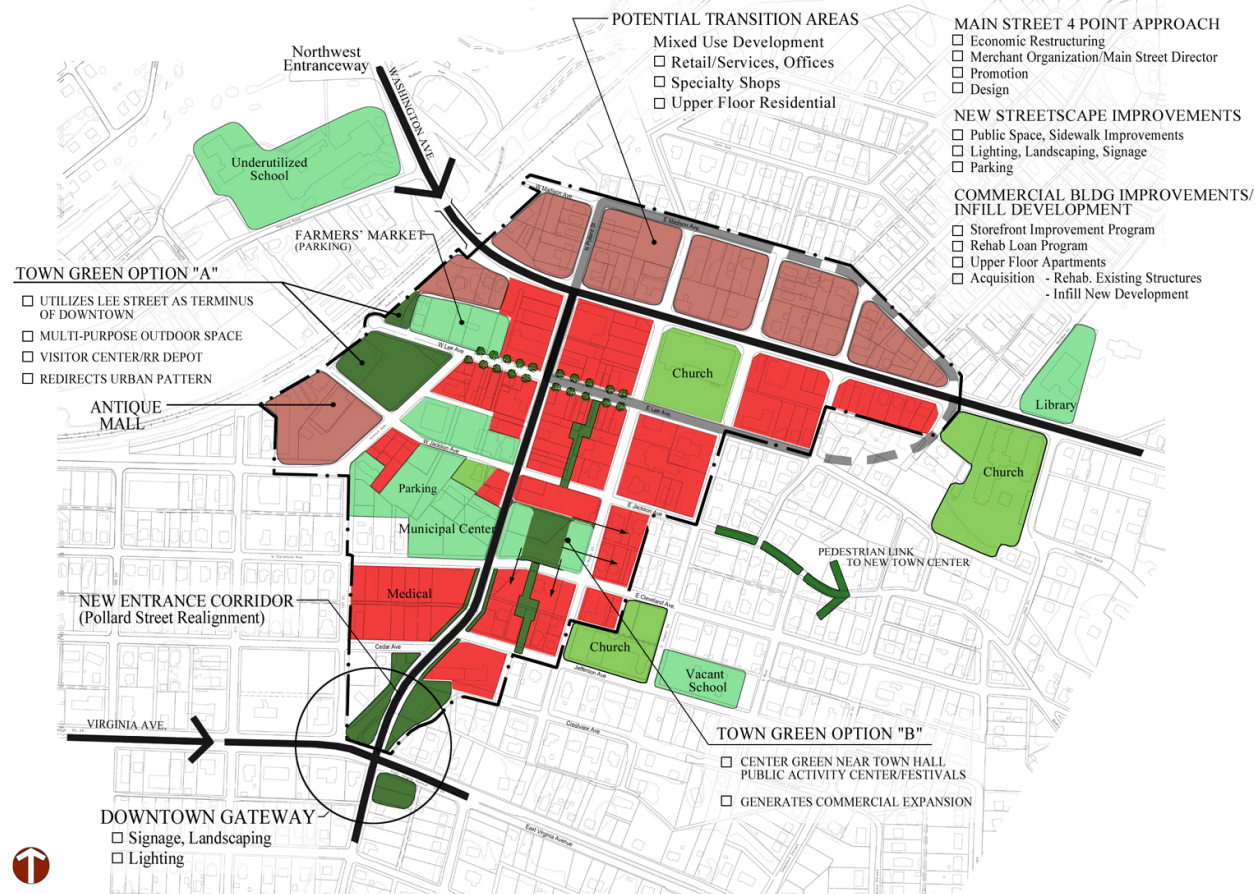


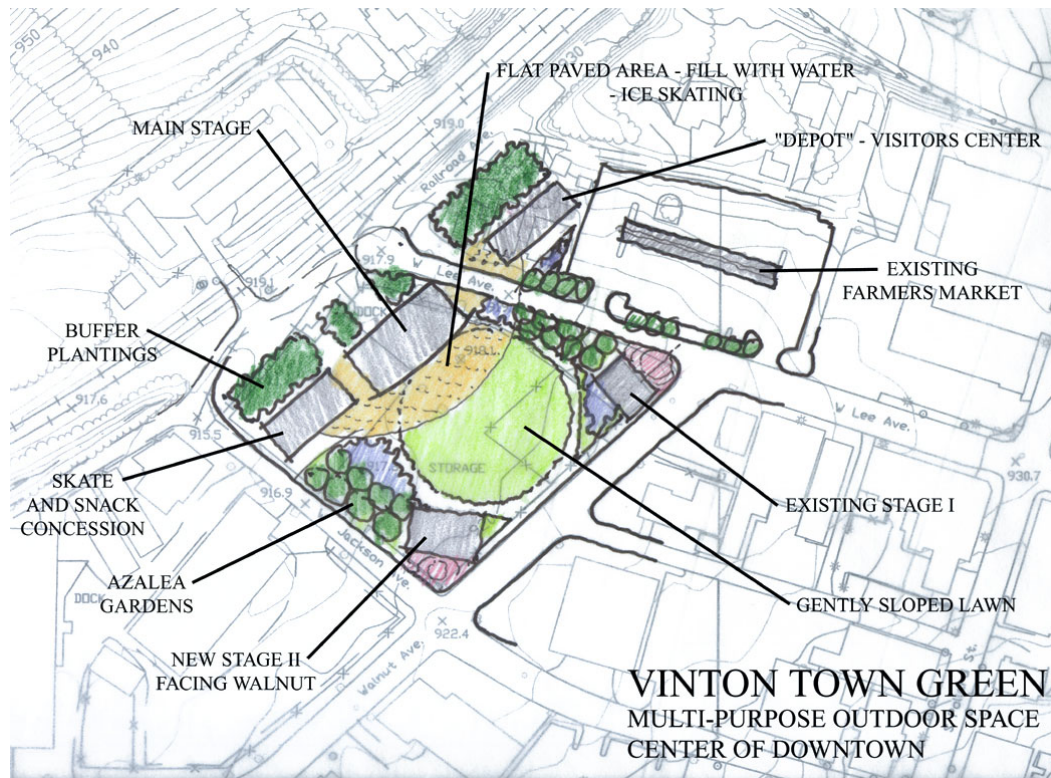
- ❑ **Economic Restructuring** – Strengthening and expanding downtown’s assets and economic role in the community.

In order for the four point approach to be successful, the Virginia Main Street program must be combined with sound guiding principles and commands that will clearly define Vinton’s role in the metropolitan area. These include:

- ❑ **Comprehensiveness** – Continue to take broad initiatives to build community support and create positive long-term effects on the community.
- ❑ **Incremental Attention** – Small projects will contribute to the overall success of the downtown and should not be overlooked in lieu of complex larger projects.

DOWNTOWN CONCEPTUAL PLAN OPTIONS





- ❑ **Self-Help** – The true success of the Virginia Main Street program is due to local leadership that truly cares for and commits to the revitalization effort.
- ❑ **Public/Private Partnerships** – Vinton must develop effective partnerships with its local businesses and jointly undertake downtown redevelopment projects utilizing each parties strengths and financial commitments.
- ❑ **Identification/Capitalization of Existing Assets** – Vinton should recognize and utilize its existing structures and promote what is already existing in the downtown through adaptive reuse, renovation, and restoration.

- ❑ **Quality Assurances** – The quality of design, ads, special events, etc. that support downtown activities and improvements must be a priority in order to create a positive image.
- ❑ **Endorsement of Change** – Continued support of a change in the public perception of Vinton's downtown as a specialty area and entertainment center.
- ❑ **Action-oriented Approach** – Carryout visual changes within the downtown to reinforce the perception of positive change.

Main Street Coordinator (activities/events, signage, seasonal landscaping, promotions)

A downtown main street coordinator is recommended for the Town to aid in the successful revitalization of the downtown. The coordinator also could serve as the economic development director and tourism director, if necessary, because of budget constraints. Duties of the downtown coordinator should include:

- ❑ Oversee daily operations of the downtown programs and events.
- ❑ Provide hands-on involvement with merchants, storefront/window designs, promotions, and financial management.
- ❑ Serve as a liaison between citizens, businesses, and local government regarding needs and local requirements.
- ❑ Organize and provide management assistance to a downtown organization.
- ❑ Attract/solicit new business development, start-up business, and expansions.
- ❑ Coordinate activities for design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring.
- ❑ Create promotional materials and oversee related activities.
- ❑ Assemble market information and showcase merchants and the downtown.



- ❑ Develop annual information directory of Vinton's businesses.
- ❑ Conduct public awareness and education programs.

Action in Support of Main Street Coordinator

- ❑ Establishing a formal Downtown Merchants Association.
- ❑ Use the merchants association as the principal resource to collectively draw consumers into the downtown.
- ❑ Create vitality within Vinton's downtown with a design improvement program that addresses facade improvements, public space, landscaping, decorative lighting, benches and other street furniture, to create a more pedestrian friendly area.



Downtown Streetscape facing East on Lee Avenue

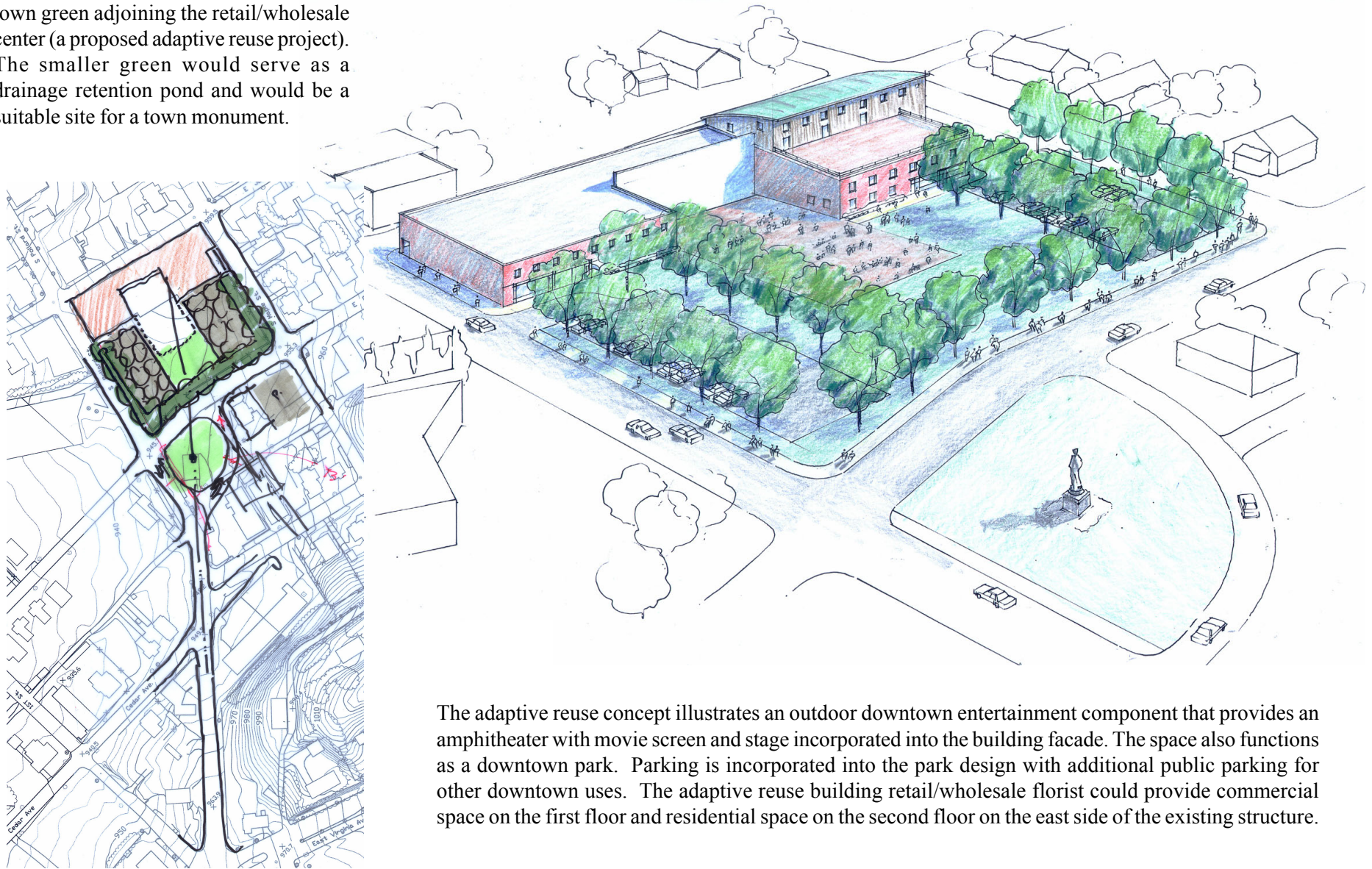


Downtown streetscape

Off-street parking is screened by a hedge with an opening onto the sidewalk. This would be proposed for other areas in downtown, such as the post office, where parking lots are located adjacent to the sidewalk. Trees and ornamental street lights with hanging baskets would align the street.



Concept for the realignment of Pollard Street, directing traffic to the proposed town green adjoining the retail/wholesale center (a proposed adaptive reuse project). The smaller green would serve as a drainage retention pond and would be a suitable site for a town monument.



The adaptive reuse concept illustrates an outdoor downtown entertainment component that provides an amphitheater with movie screen and stage incorporated into the building facade. The space also functions as a downtown park. Parking is incorporated into the park design with additional public parking for other downtown uses. The adaptive reuse building retail/wholesale florist could provide commercial space on the first floor and residential space on the second floor on the east side of the existing structure.



Proposed Public Capital Improvements Program

The capital improvements program for downtown should address public space, the provision of financial assistance for existing merchants and property owners, and incentives for new investments.

- ❑ Create and adopt a matching façade grant program to assist local entrepreneurs in the renovation and improvement of private commercial property. Proposed parameters of the program may include:
 - A marketing program and brochure to encourage businesses to participate.
 - Designated application periods.
 - Authorized amount of funds to support the program.
 - The maximum available public dollars and match requirements for a single business.
 - Minimum design standards for façade parking and landscaping improvements.
- ❑ Realign Pollard Street to improve the southern access from Virginia Avenue (Route 24) to downtown. The street would serve as a lighted landscaped gateway to downtown. Proposed enhancements include:
 - Green space around the Pollard Street realignment including trees, a median with a flowerbed, ornamental lighting, crosswalks, and creatively designed signage.
 - A statue or architectural feature should help serve as a focal point.
- ❑ Develop the Vinton Town Green - a multiple-purpose outdoor space for events, festivals, entertainment venues and the like. The Green should be developed in proximity to the existing Farmers' Market and enhanced with public streetscape improvements along West Lee Avenue.
- ❑ Renovate and convert the train depot into a new Visitor's Center.
- ❑ Property acquisition of vacant, deteriorating, and underutilized buildings and their clearance or rehabilitation for disposition to private commercial enterprises. The Town may wish to partner with private developers in the adaptive reuse of certain major structures, with assurances for jobs and private investment dollars.

- ❑ Downtown Rehabilitation Loan Pool - Establishment of a low interest rehabilitation loan pool available through local financial institutions for the downtown to address renovation of existing commercial properties. Funds could be used in conjunction with Facade Program Grants.



Municipal Building and Historic Town Clock

- ❑ Provide financial assistance (low interest loans and/or grants) for the renovation of upper floor housing in the downtown.
- ❑ Develop streetscape improvements along major downtown streets to include sidewalk treatments, decorative crosswalk, decorative lighting, drainage, landscaping and screening, and public parking enhancements.
- ❑ Provide design assistance services in accordance with adopted design standards for the downtown for existing merchants and new business.



FUNDING RESOURCES

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The Virginia Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides funding to eligible units of local government through a competitive grant process to address community development needs including housing and infrastructure. CDBG funds are made available to DHCD by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the spring of each year grant Community Improvement Grant (CIG) applications are due to DHCD for review and approval. Economic Environment Enhancement projects using CDBG funds can assist in the stabilization and revitalization of Vinton's downtown and provide the extra funding that is needed to conduct façade and streetscape improvements and quality upper floor housing.

Capital Improvements Program should incorporate the cost of downtown redevelopment activities into the Town's annual Capital Improvements Program budget. Particular emphasis and priority should be placed in funding in support of associated land acquisition needed for a future focal point in the downtown.

The Transportation Equity Act (TEA – 21) offers \$18 million in federal funding annually to Virginia Communities through VDOT to improve communities and create a more balanced transportation system. Funds are intended for nontraditional transportation projects. Basic guidelines of the program include a minimum 20% local match of funds, public hearings, and endorsement by local government. Under the program a project is eligible only if it has a relationship to the surface transportation system and qualifies under at least one of the 12 eligible enhancement activities. Vinton's downtown would be eligible under numerous categories including Historic Preservation, Landscaping and Scenic Beautification, and Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) offers rehabilitation tax credits which are dollar-for-dollar reductions in income tax liability for taxpayers who rehabilitate historic buildings. Depending upon eligibility these credits

are available under the federal or state program, or in some cases both. Through the historic tax credit programs property owners are given substantial incentives for private investment in preservation, resulting in enormous advantages to the public which include the revitalization of older historic buildings often found in downtown areas.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development program offers a variety of loan and grant programs for businesses and community facilities in Virginia. The Community Facility loan and grant programs are for the purpose of enhancing or constructing community facilities for public services and safety, telecommunications, and health care. Such uses include but are not limited to nursing homes, health clinics, fire stations, rescue equipment, libraries, and day care facilities. Rural Business Enterprise Grants can be utilized to assist in site development, infrastructure improvements, and rehabilitation of commercial buildings to help create jobs.



ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this section is to identify various revisions to the Town's Zoning Ordinance that should be considered as means to help achieve particular goals, objectives and strategies set forth in the 2004 – 2024 Comprehensive Plan and in this supplement to the Plan. Many of the potential revisions are mentioned elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan and in this supplement in the context of overall implementation strategies for achieving goals and objectives.

Most of the potential revisions are intentionally stated generally and in concept form. Further and more detailed analysis will be necessary to fashion specific zoning amendments that most effectively promote the Plan goals and objectives, while at the same time are consistent with applicable State enabling legislation, appropriately fit the context and format of the current ordinance, and provide an equitable balance among the different community interests that are affected by zoning regulations.

The following revisions to the Town's Zoning Ordinance should be considered.

Revisions to existing zoning district classifications:

- Modify the **R-2 Residential District** regulations to reduce the permitted density of townhouses from 12 per acre to 8 per acre to coincide with the “medium density residential” land use category of the Comprehensive Plan and to provide a density more compatible with single-family development in R-2 neighborhoods.
- Modify the **R-3 Residential District** regulations to enhance the compatibility of various dwelling types and densities and to be more consistent with the “high density residential” land use category of the Comprehensive Plan. Modifications should include reducing maximum multifamily density from 24 to 20 units per acre and adding a special use permit requirement for townhouses, roominghouses and boardinghouses.
- Add to the **R-3 Residential District**, “assisted living facilities” as a permitted special use with appropriate density limits in order to encourage additional housing opportunities for elderly citizens; and change “assisted care facilities” to “assisted living facilities” in the **RB Residential Business District**, and modify the definition accordingly.
- Revise the **RB Residential Business District** in order to provide more compatible and more effective transitions between residential areas and downtown or general commercial areas. Revisions should include: adding a size limit on newly-constructed or enlarged buildings for office, personal service and similar uses to encourage a building scale that is compatible with dwellings in such areas; adding a building lot coverage limit to prevent over-building of sites; delete townhouses as a permitted special use; review other permitted uses for appropriateness and possible deletions/additions; and require a special use permit for drive-up facilities, with a provision to enable prohibition of drive-up facilities adjacent to residential uses.
- Reduce the 10-acre minimum district size for the **PD Planned Development District** (e.g. to 5 acres) in order to increase the potential for sites that would qualify for planned cluster residential and mixed-use development.
- Review the **CB Central Business District** use regulations to identify any uses permitted by right that may be potentially incompatible with Plan objectives for revitalization of downtown. Consider requiring a special use permit for such uses in order to minimize their impact (e.g. wholesale, warehouse, and distribution uses). Also, add gazebo and other outdoor civic entertainment facilities to CB District permitted uses.
- Modify the **CB Central Business District** yard requirements for parking areas and parking lots to require that an ornamental fence, low decorative wall and/or shrubbery of specified minimum height be pro-



vided in the setback area to enhance the pedestrian environment and improve appearance and safety along the edges of parking areas.

New zoning district classifications:

- Create a **Planned Industrial District** classification in the ordinance to provide opportunities to map the district as the need arises. Such a district would provide a means to encourage new development and redevelopment for small, professionally planned industrial parks. The district should limit uses to light industrial, wholesale and distribution, research and development, and “flex-space” uses. It should include requirements for site amenities such as landscaped setbacks, site landscaping, screening, limited signage, and prohibition of outdoor storage.
- Create a **Historic District** zoning classification with provision for an architectural review board to administer such districts as may ultimately be designated in qualifying historic and architecturally significant neighborhoods. Historic zoning would promote historic and architectural preservation by providing means to review and approve the architectural character of buildings and structures that are newly constructed, altered or restored, and would enable an opportunity to address the character of new infill development.
- Establish a **Corridor Overlay District** to be applied along designated gateway entrances and commercial corridors through the Town. Such a district would provide a means of enhancing the streetscape, improving vehicle and pedestrian safety and improving the appearance of existing and newly developing commercial street frontages. The overlay district would include higher standards applicable to newly developed and redeveloped properties that would be applied in addition to the normal development standards of the existing, or underlying, zoning.

Standards should include provisions for: planting of additional trees and shrubs at a specified rate and specified minimum size along street frontages, with credit for retention of existing healthy trees; increased landscaped setbacks for parking areas, with incentives for reduced building setback if parking is not located between the building and the street; incentives for installing low, monument type signs rather than taller pole signs; minimizing the number of driveways and encouraging shared driveways and cross-connections between parking areas of adjacent businesses; and locating service and loading areas to the rear of buildings and screening them so as not to be visible from the street or from adjoining properties. Parking area improvement standards and enhanced outdoor lighting standards described below should also be applicable within the Corridor Overlay District.

New or revised supplementary regulations:

- Establish **parking area improvement standards** to be applicable to all parking areas over a certain size (e.g. 15 spaces) in all zoning districts as a means to encourage landscaping, reduce impervious cover and improve the appearance, safety, and efficiency of parking facilities. The requirements would apply to new and expanded parking areas serving businesses, offices, multifamily developments, large public and institutional uses, and possibly industrial uses. Standards should include provisions for: landscaped islands and other landscaped areas within parking areas (e.g. not less than 5% of the total parking area); planting of trees and shrubs in islands; locating landscaped islands to better define access aisles and driveways and so that not more than a specified number of parking spaces are situated in a row without an intervening island; providing modest-width landscaped strips separating parking areas from adjacent properties; and encouraging defined pedestrian ways within and adjacent to parking areas.
- Revise the supplementary regulations pertaining to off-street parking requirements to clarify that **joint parking areas** (Sec. 5-32) for businesses and certain other uses are permitted, and to allow **shared park-**



ing for adjacent uses that do not operate during the same hours. Such provisions would encourage a reduction in the total number of parking spaces provided and thus a reduction in impervious cover. Consider a provision to enable a modest reduction in the total number of parking spaces required if shared driveways and cross-connections are provided between parking areas for adjacent businesses.

- Review current provisions for the **number of off-street parking spaces** (Sec. 5-30) required for permitted uses, and evaluate them with regard to actual parking needs to determine if there are instances where parking requirements are excessive and can be reduced as a means to avoid excessive paved areas and inefficient use of land. Also, determine if the required parking ratios for certain uses should vary depending on the size or particular characteristics of the use.
- Revise the current provisions for **paving of parking areas** (Sec. 5-37) to enable alternative paving techniques that will reduce impervious cover and minimize storm water run-off.
- Revise the current **outdoor lighting** provisions (Sec. 5-22) to: limit the intensity of lighting as measured at the property line; limit the height of pole-mounted light fixtures; require lighting visible from streets and adjacent residential areas to be of a “sharp cut-off” design to orient light downward to prevent glare; and require that features lighted from below, such as signs, be provided with deflector shields to prevent glare. Also, require that the means to satisfy the requirements be shown on site plans.
- Add requirements for **screening and location of dumpsters and outdoor service areas** to provide that such be so located on the site or be screened by solid fencing, walls, or evergreen vegetation of a specified height as not to be visible from streets or adjacent properties.
- Revise the current **stormwater management** regulations (Sec. 5-20) to address water quality as mandated by the Environmental Protec-

tion Agency and the State Department of Environmental Quality and to encourage low-impact development practices to reduce the impacts of stormwater run-off.

Administration and enforcement:

- Add general criteria to the **site plan review** statement of purpose (Sec. 7-16) to reinforce Comprehensive Plan objectives and emphasize that the site plan review process is intended to be a means to encourage that new development be efficient, attractive and compatible. The criteria should state that, to the extent possible given the intended and permitted use of the property, site plans be designed to: preserve existing trees, wooded areas and desirable natural features of the site; provide sufficient landscaping to enhance the appearance of the development; incorporate low-impact development practices; provide for safe and efficient internal vehicle circulation and connections to public streets; provide a compatible relationship between buildings, parking areas and open spaces on the site and the existing development on adjacent properties; and provide an efficient and harmonious relationship among the various elements of the site plan.
- Create an illustrated **development standards manual** to be adopted as policy by the Town Council and used by staff and the development community in applying zoning ordinance and other Town development standards. Such a manual would aid in application and administration of Town development standards and would be a means to encourage quality development that exceeds minimum standards. It should include sketches showing examples of preferred and alternative ways to comply with standards for such things as landscaping, screening, transitional yards, parking area improvements, signage, lighting, and low-impact development practices. The manual should include detailed information and examples of such items as appropriate tree species and sizes, acceptable fence materials and design, alternative parking area paving materials, acceptable types of outdoor



lighting and fixtures, and desired signage design and placement. The manual could also incorporate design standards that may be established for public improvements by the Town, such as street trees, signage and lighting.

General ordinance maintenance and upkeep:

- Review changes in state enabling legislation (Title 15.2 of the Code of Virginia) that have occurred since adoption of the zoning ordinance, and revise the ordinance as may be necessary to ensure compliance.
- Review amendments made to the zoning ordinance since its adoption in 1995, and make any revisions that may be needed to ensure proper integration of the amendments with regard to format, content and language of the ordinance.
- Revise, as necessary, particular provisions of the zoning ordinance that have been identified as troublesome due to interpretation or application issues that have been raised (*for example: location and size of accessory structures, parking of recreational vehicles in yards, personal service, or other uses not specifically listed in the ordinance, and accessory dwelling use in industrial districts*).



SUMMARY

The Town of Vinton's Economic and Community Development Plan is a result of Vinton's visioning process to guide the Town's growth for the next 20 years. The five (5) priority community elements that emerged during the comprehensive planning process became the focus of Vinton's future development plan, and the preceding community development action plans. Also, because of its importance to Vinton residents, municipal staff, elected officials, and stakeholders and quality of life was incorporated into each of the proposed programs:

- ❑ Gateway Entrances/Corridor
- ❑ Housing and Neighborhood Preservation
- ❑ Greenways/Parks and Recreation/Youth Centers
- ❑ Economic Development
- ❑ Downtown Redevelopment

Plans of action and implementation methods were developed to carry out the strategies within each element. With assistance from Vinton's design team, citizen participation was heard throughout the planning workshops and forums.

At the conclusion of the public process, a prioritization exercise was conducted to allow public input to determine what priority issues Vinton should address in the near future. Of the twenty-two (22) choices that were provided the six (6) highest scoring elements are listed below.

- ❑ Design and Develop a New Town Center
- ❑ Create a Downtown Green with an emphasis on the existing Farmers' Market and the reconstruction of Vinton's train station
- ❑ Adaptively reuse Old William Byrd High School and Roland E. Cook Elementary School into appropriate elderly assisted living facility housing

- ❑ Complete infrastructure improvements and housing improvements in the Gladetown Neighborhood
- ❑ Design and construct effective and consistent signage throughout Vinton
- ❑ Construct proposed greenways throughout Vinton as opportunities arise to enhance pedestrian mobility

These are the priorities for Council action and funding within the next five (5) years. Several implementation functions should occur in order to jump start the economic and community development program.

The initial steps of implementation for the six (6) priority elements are:

A. New Town Center

1. Meeting with principal property owners
2. Organization of development entity with identified roles and responsibilities, and preliminary commitments
3. Capital commitments for land assemblage
4. Market Study and conceptual design

B. Downtown Green

1. Acquisition of Property - commitment of public funds
2. Preliminary design with cost estimates
3. Application for State and Federal funding assistance

C. Adaptive Reuse County Schools

1. Negotiations with County in property transfer and reuse of property
2. Identify sponsor/developer for housing development
3. Financial Feasibility Assessment - Town assistance



D. Gladetown Neighborhood Revitalization

1. Organization of Neighborhood Advisory Committee
2. Planning Grant application for State funding
3. Capital commitment for infrastructure improvement

E. Signage

1. Authorize design of options for various type signage
2. Capital commitment for signage construction

F. Greenways - Wolf Creek Extension

1. Meeting with County on timetable, funding options and design parameters
2. Capital commitment for trail system improvements

Specific capital improvements are reflected in Vinton's Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Local funds will serve to leverage state and federal funds to carry out each activity.

Town will need to approve a Capital Improvements Program with financial commitments:

1. Gladetown infrastructure improvements
2. Land assemblage funding
3. Signage - direction and informational, entrance signs
4. Greenway Construction - Wolf Creek extension - trail system

Vinton's Future Land Use Map reflects the Town's vision for development in the years to come. The map displays logical development for Vinton based on current trends and a strategic plan for growth that will enhance the Town's quality of life. These include restoration of traditional neighborhoods, an integrated greenway system, downtown revitalization, gateway and corridor enhancements, and economic develop-

ment initiatives. The zoning district regulations will serve to direct future development as demand for specific uses increases or decreases.

The mechanisms listed above for project implementation are discussed in Vinton's Comprehensive Plan in far greater detail. It is important to note the significant role these mechanisms play in implementing visions found throughout the Economic and Community Development Plan. These mechanisms help provide a feasible avenue to begin undertaking projects that will move Vinton towards the future.

